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AUGUSTINE'S EARLY THOUGHT ON THE REDEMPTIVE FUNCTION OF DIVINE JUDGEMENT

Bart van Egmond

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BART VAN EGMOND

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1

Introduction

GOD'S JUDGEMENT AND HIS MERCY: WHY STUDY AUGUSTINE ON THIS TOPIC TODAY?

'God loves you as you are'. Expressions such as these have become common among Western Christians, at least in the evangelical branch of Christianity to which the writer of this book belongs. Hymns and Psalms that sing about God's wrath over human sin and rejoice in divine forgiveness and mercy are supplanted by songs that centre on man's mystical union with God who is an overflowing fountain of love and embrace. Inclusion and diversity are favoured over moral and doctrinal strictness. These developments in Western Christianity indicate that Christians find it increasingly difficult to understand how the justice and holiness of God relate to his love and mercy.

How is this to be explained? Charles Taylor has argued that since the Reformation, European culture has moved away from what he calls the 'juridical-penal framework' to understand God's relationship to the world. The Augustinian-Anselmian tradition regarded humanity as created good, but as at present suffering under the penal consequences of sin (both original and actual). Humanity was guilty and God proved to be a righteous judge by punishing sin both in time and in eternity. At the same time, this God was believed to be merciful. He had shown his love in history by sending his Son into the world to pay the penalty of sin and in doing so save his people from eternal damnation. In this framework, the fear of God, the pain of suffering as chastisement of sin, but also the joy in forgiveness and God-given satisfaction for human debt, paving the way to a new life here and hereafter, were part and parcel of how the Christian perceived his relation to God.[1]

The rise of deism and humanism altered this understanding of God's relationship to his creation. These philosophies understood the present world as a harmonious order, which contains all the resources needed to attain human flourishing. Moreover, they did not regard humanity as radically fallen;

[1] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 78.

it rather stood in need of improvement. Through the gift of the light of reason, God had indeed endowed humanity with the tool to improve itself. In this picture, God is perceived not primarily as humanity's judge, but rather as its educator or helper. It is not without reason that the Enlightenment thinkers fiercely attacked the doctrines of original sin, penal atonement, and predestination.[2] These doctrines did not fit in the new worldview in which God and man were perceived as co-workers towards a better future for mankind, rather than as judge/saviour and condemned sinners, respectively.

In postmodern times, after the eclipse of the grand narratives and the enlightened optimism about history, this perception of the relationship between God and man has not essentially changed. It has rather received a Gnostic twist.[3] Postmodernism no longer perceives humans as rational agents, capable of moving themselves and the world towards a better future, but it sees them as battlegrounds of innumerable social forces.[4] At the same time, there is a widespread, romantic belief in the goodness of our spontaneous aspirations. Evil does not arise from our rebellion against God, but is alienation from a pure self, primarily caused by external influences. The mission of the late modern person is to discover his or her inner core and express it in an authentic way of life. In this framework, God's salvific action towards humans is perceived in therapeutic terms: he reminds us of our true identity, and helps us to recover it.[5]

These modern and late modern views of the relationship between God and mankind have supplanted the juridical-penal framework of the Augustinian-Anselmian tradition, which has dominated the West for such a long time. God is rather perceived as opposing the evil that we suffer, or as suffering with us, than as somehow acting through it as our judge. If humans are essentially good, and God intends human flourishing, why would he allow us to suffer, or even demand the death of his Son for human redemption?[6] This view of God also explains the modern difficulty with God's exercise of revenge in the Old Testament. How can a God of love, who exists for our wellbeing, command the death of essentially good people?

This culturally conditioned change in the understanding of the Christian faith instigated my interest in Augustine of Hippo's (354–430) understanding of the relationship between God's grace and his justice. How does Augustine conceive of the place and function of divine justice within the proces of salvation? I have chosen Augustine, as he shaped the 'juridical-penal-framework' that defined Western Christianity for such a long time. Rereading his theology on this issue

[2] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 262.

[3] On the return of Gnosticism in postmodernity, see Luca Di Blasi, *Der Geist in der Revolte. Der Gnostizismus und seine Wiederkehr in der Postmoderne* (Munich: W. Fink, 2002).

[4] For the postmodern turn to the 'victimization of the agent', see Adonis Vidu, *Atonement, Law and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014), 183.

[5] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 618.

[6] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 651ff.

could be of help to present-day Christians, who are willing to look into the mirror of their own tradition and evaluate the way they understand their faith.

What makes it even more interesting to study Augustine on this subject is that the movements of thought with which Augustine conversed show striking similarities with modern and postmodern ideas that circulate in our world. Notwithstanding the differences, the optimism of the Enlightenment about human nature and its capacity to be educated resembles classical pedagogical ideas about human reason and its capacity to emancipate man from irrational behaviour. Also the Gnosticism of Augustine's time seems to return somehow in late modernity. The Gnostic (Manichaean) argument that humans have a divine core, from which they are alienated by an evil nature, resembles late modern views of the human person as essentially good, but suffering under self-alienation caused by external social forces. And the Gnostic view of God as himself suffering under evil, and redeeming man through gnosis, resembles the postmodern preference of a non-violent God, who is not sovereign over evil, but suffers with us, and helps us to recover our true inner identity.

This book is limited in its scope. It offers a historical reading of Augustine, rather than a contemporary application of his theology. Moreover, it does not cover all of Augustine's works, but describes the development of his thought on the relationship between God's grace and his justice during the first ten years of his career as a philosopher and theologian. This does not mean, however, that the book is only of interest to those who read Augustine from an historical perspective. As indicated above, the historical context in which Augustine developed his Christian theology of grace and judgement resembles our modern and postmodern situation in many respects. This makes the study also relevant to a readership that seeks for theological inspiration to deal with contemporary questions.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Before we start our actual journey through Augustine's works, it is helpful to contextualize the research question. Which theological and philosophical traditions influenced Augustine and defined the context in which his thought on the salvific meaning of divine judgement developed? In the following sections I will first sketch the anti-Gnostic theological tradition that Augustine received as a young Christian and which shaped the framework of his thinking on divine justice and mercy. Secondly, I will describe the relevant aspects of the classical pedagogical tradition with which Augustine was acquainted, both through his own education, and through his study of Cicero and other philosophical sources. The last section provides a discussion of how this study contributes to existing research in the field of Augustinian studies.

The (Alexandrian) Anti-dualist Tradition

The great obstacle that held Augustine back from returning to the religion of his youth was a Gnostic form of Christianity: Manichaeism. After Cicero had enkindled in him a desire for the immortality of wisdom, he had turned to the Manichees. Both their criticism of orthodox Christianity, their explanation of evil, and their promise of offering a purely rational religion had attracted Augustine.

He describes his return to Catholic Christianity as a struggle to overcome Manichaeism and to find a credible alternative that would satisfy his desire for wisdom. The problem that tormented Augustine the most was the origin of evil. In the Milanese circle, represented by Ambrose, Simplicianus, and Mallius Theodorus, he discovered a concept of evil that enabled him to recover the religion of his youth in a new way.[7] Building upon a Platonist ontology, they taught him that evil is to be understood as the soul's voluntary aversion from the highest good towards lower things (*peccatum*), and as the penalty that follows upon this choice (*poena peccati*). This explanation enabled Augustine to understand his soul's entanglement in carnal habit as God's penalty for his own sins, rather than as the assault of another nature on the divine element within him. He further came to know Christ as the Wisdom of God, who had assumed a human body to liberate the soul and permit it to achieve its spiritual destiny.[8]

In Milan Augustine adopted a form of Christianity that was both anti-dualist and philosophical. It is very likely that he became acquainted with the Alexandrian apologetic tradition, represented by Clement and Origen.[9]

[7] For passages in which Ambrose attacks Gnostic ideas about evil as a nature, and describes it as sin and its punishment, see *hex.* 1,31; 4,13; 4,17; *parad.* 6,31.

[8] *conf.* 7–8.

[9] R. Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse. Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962), 187ff. Holte argues for the influence of a theological tradition of an Alexandrian type ('de type alexandrin'), expressed in Augustine's ideal of the Christian *sapiens*, propagated by the Alexandrians Clement and Origen, but absent in Ambrose and the Latin Fathers. Holte does not express himself, however, on literary influences. György Heidl, *The Influence of Origen on the Young Augustine: A Chapter of the History of Origenism* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009) has attempted to dig deeper into Origen's possible influences on Augustine and arrives at the daring thesis that the 'libri quidam pleni … bonas res Arabicas' that Augustine mentions in *Contra Academicos* 2,5 were not the books of the Platonists, but rather translations of Origen. He also traces Origen's influence in Augustine's early *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*. Iliari Ramelli, 'Origen in Augustine: A Paradoxical Reception', *Numen* 60 (2013), 280–307 has built upon Heidl's work to argue that Augustine in his early years taught the doctrine of *apokatastasis* (see footnote 30). For a more reserved evaluation of Origen's influence on Augustine, see Berthold Altaner, 'Augustinus und Origenes', in idem, *Kleine patristische Schriften* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967), 224–52. However one evaluates Origen's direct influence on Augustine, it seems to me that there is enough evidence from his early writings that Augustine was attracted by the combination of anti-dualism and philosophical (especially Platonic) aspiration that characterized Origen's account of Christianity. These similarities have also been noted by

Their anti-Gnostic theology, which they presented as a form of Christian pedagogy of the human soul, bears much resemblance to Augustine's early theological preoccupations.

In the wake of predecessors such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement and Origen fought against a Gnostic understanding of reality, which attributed the creation of the material world to a lower deity (the demiurge) that was opposed to the highest god, or had originated from a fall in the constellation of divine beings. Gnosticism conceived of the true god as purely transcendental, absolutely surpassing the sphere of *heimarmenè*, the sublunar reality where dark powers rule over our bodies. The highest god does not intervene in this world by force, as the demiurge does, but by revealing secret knowledge (*gnosis*) to remind fallen souls of their divine identities. According to its opponents, Gnosticism connected this view of the world to a soteriological determinism. The Gnostics believed they were saved by nature, because of the identity of their souls with the highest god.[10] As long as they were in this world, they only had to resist the power of evil that intended to harm them through the body. God was on their side, but they had to suffer the onslaughts of the demiurg until its final defeat.[11] This dualism also affected their view of the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. The Gnostics as it were 'reversed' salvation history as it is presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Creator and Lord of Israel, whom the Old Testament presents as the one and only ruler of the world, they presented as the evil persecutor of the Gnostics, the allies of the true transcendental god. This Old Testament dissembler continuously tried to destroy the Gnostics by persecuting and punishing them.[12] Adam's exclusion from paradise, the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—all such judgements were seen as evil attempts of the demiurg to exercise his dominion over those who belonged to the true god. Jesus inaugurated something entirely new. He was regarded as one of the mediators through whom the transcendent god revealed *gnosis* to fallen souls, to remind them of their homeland above the heavens, and by doing so to liberate them from the power of darkness.

Given this perceived unity between the divine and the soul of the Gnostic, it is not surprising that Gnostic Christians were regarded as relativizing external

C. P. Bammel, 'Augustine, Origen and the Exegesis of St. Paul', *Augustinianum* 32/2 (1992), 341–68 (347–51).

[10] Winrich Löhr, 'Gnostic Determinism Reconsidered', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1991), 381–90; Luise Schottroff, 'Animae naturaliter salvandae, zum Problem der himmlischen Herkunft des Gnostikers', in *Christentum und Gnosis*, edited by Walther Eltester (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1969), 65–98. Schottroff argues that this heresiological category often does not fit the Gnostic texts themselves.

[11] Jason David BeDuhn, 'Augustine, Manichaeism, and the Logic of Persecution', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 7 (2005), 153–66 (160–6).

[12] Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 146–8; Schottroff, 'Animae naturaliter salvandae', 70.

authority. This is identifiable, for example, in Clement's *Paedagosos,* where the author depicts his Gnostic opponents as people who regard themselves as already perfect after their enlightenment and therefore as no longer in need of teaching by others whom they regarded as lower than themselves.[13] In the eyes of their opponents, therefore, Gnostic anthropology was dangerously liable to forms of anti-nomianism,[14] a charge that Augustine will repeat against the Manichees.

Clement and Origen used their pedagogical interpretation of Christianity to battle the Gnostic worldview. They emphasized that the Creator of this world and the Father of Jesus Christ are one and the same God. They further strongly defended the doctrine of providence. They believed that God the Creator cares for this world and governs it in a righteous way, rewarding everyone according to the merits of his free will. Not nature, but rather merit, is what counts for salvation. It is from this context that their discourse on divine punishment is to be understood. Against the Gnostic opposition between the good, transcendent god and the severe or just god, they argued that the one God expresses his goodness exactly by showing his justice in punishing sin.[15] In doing so, God acts as a pedagogue who intends to educate his pupils to become wise adults. In his *Paedagogos*, Clement states that God as a good educator adapts himself to the capabilities of his students. He prefers to teach by words, but for those who are not eager to learn, he uses the method of disciplinary punishment. In this regard, the incarnate Word does not differ from the God of the Old Testament. Both in the Old Testament and in the New, the Word teaches through words, appealing to human reason and his free will, but threatens the unwilling with the rod of correction, because he wants to save them from ultimate damnation.[16]

By thus presenting salvation history as a pedagogical process, the apologists connected biblical language about God's discipline of his people (LXX: *paideia*) to the Greek educational tradition. This connection is also evident from Clement's use of medical imagery to characterize God's disciplinary treatment of his people.[17] As we shall see, the comparison between medicine and education was widespread among philosophical schools in Antiquity.

[13] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, 1,52.

[14] Albrecht Dihle, 'Gerechtigkeit', *Reallexikon für antikes Christentum* 10, 245–360 (318–19).

[15] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, 1,53–74.

[16] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, 1,60–1: 'Scripture seems to be suggesting that those whom the Word does not heal through persuasion He will heal with threats; and those whom threats do not heal the rod will; and those whom the rod does not heal, fire will consume' (translation: FC, 55); Judith L. Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher According to Clement of Alexandria', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9/1 (2001), 3–25 (7, 16).

[17] Clement of Alexandria, *Paidagogos*, 1,81 where Clement says that the physician adapts his treatment to the illness of the patient, sometimes administering mild, sometimes stringent medicines.

Thus, Clement's presentation of Christianity as the fulfilment of Greek *paideia*[18] not only served apologetic purposes towards his pagan contemporaries, but also functioned as a means to counter Gnosticism.

Clement's successor Origen further developed this pedagogical understanding of Christianity. Against the Gnostic question of why the situations of souls in this world are so different—if they are created by a good and just God—Origen argued that God created all souls equal, as disembodied entities, but sent them into bodies as a punishment for their voluntary aversion to God. The distinct situations in which they currently find themselves should be explained by the differences of their merits. This does not mean that material creation as such is evil. It is rather a secondary order, springing from God's goodness, by which God intends to restrain the effects of sin, and lead fallen souls back to himself.[19] He gave them a bodily existence that suited the measure of their sin, in order to educate each soul through the suffering allotted to it. Each soul receives the education that it needs. Some need to be constrained like children and slaves, because they lack an understanding of their need of salvation; others can be taught by words and reason. But the doctor of all souls makes sure that all receive the treatment that they need, so that God will eventually become all in all.[20] In this educational process, the incarnate Logos is the teacher par excellence.[21]

In his account of divine pedagogy Origen reserved a significant place for human free will. Only because souls retain free will (*prohairesis*)[22] and continue to participate in the divine Logos, can they cooperate with God's teaching, and eventually be restored to their original condition.[23] As God does not coerce anyone, but makes use of the free will of his rational creatures, the process of purification might take several *aions* (thus Origen adapts the Platonic idea of *metempsychosis*), but it will eventually result in the *apokatastasis pantoon*, the restoration of all rational creatures to their original situation of contemplation.[24] It should be noted at this point that Origen is very

[18] Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 24–5; Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy', 1.

[19] Origen, *De principiis*, 2,9,5–8 (ANF 4, 291–2). [20] Origen, *De principiis*, 3,5,8.

[21] Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis. Studiën über Origenes und sein Verhältniss zum Platonismus* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 22; Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter Verlag, 1932), 61–5. Christ brings to completion both God's education in the Old Testament and in the tradition of Greek philosophy.

[22] On Origen's anti-Gnostic interest to preserve the freedom of the will, see Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 102–24.

[23] Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, 24–7.

[24] Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, 26; Ramelli, 'Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism: Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Biblical and Philosophical Basis of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis', *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007), 313–56 (esp. 314–22). Ramelli points out that Origen's Platonic presupposition that God is the good who necessarily communicates itself, and his view of evil as privation, underpins Origen's theory of universal restoration. Mark S. M. Scott

reluctant to teach the doctrine of *apokatastasis* to everyone, because it might provoke moral laxity. It should not be taught to those to whom the threat of eternal punishment is still useful, just as children profit from the threat of punishment, even if the parent eventually refrains from executing it.[25] Origen sees the Church as a pedagogical institute that accommodates to each individual soul, teaching some, threatening others as still-irrational children, and applying remedial punishments for their sins.[26]

What is important for the present investigation is that Clement and Origen attempted to reconcile God's goodness and his justice over against the Gnostics by interpreting divine punishment in time exclusively from a pedagogical perspective. In their system, God is just in treating us according to the merits of our free will, and good in that his punishments for sin are never merely retributive, but rather constructive. By punishing us, God appeals to our mind and will so that we might turn back to him. For Origen this connection of divine goodness and justice even leads to the idea of the restoration of all things. Eventually, there is no retributive justice from God's side, but rather only remedial justice, even for the devil and his angels.

Ekkehard Mühlenberg has argued that Origen's account of evil resembles the understanding of evil in Neoplatonism, in that he does not regard it as radically opposed to the good, as an anti-power, but rather as an alienation from the good, which is always encompassed by the self-communication of the good.[27] This idea finds expression in Origen's doctrine of creation. When the soul turns away from God, bodily creation is the means through which God arrests souls in their fall and draws them back to himself, denying evil the opportunity to take radical possession of man. God's justice and his mercy thus always work together. In this regard, Origen's account of evil differs from that of Athanasius, Mühlenberg argues. Athanasius regarded the first sin of humanity as unleashing a dynamic power that takes possession of humans and makes them radically opposed to God. The experience of suffering and death, which results from sin, does not foster their return, but rather makes them seek comfort and hope in self-invented idols. Only the divine choice to cancel the power of evil through the death of the Word itself could liberate humanity from evil's power. In this vision, divine justice and mercy are much more differentiated.[28] God's punishment of sin does not necessarily have a pedagogical function.

('Guarding the Mysteries of Salvation: The Pastoral Pedagogy of Origen's Universalism', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18/3 (2010), 347–70) has argued, however, that this doctrine has an experimental character and is counterbalanced by many texts in which Origen argues for the existence of eternal punishment.

[25] Scott, 'Guarding the Mysteries of Salvation', 365.

[26] Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, 82.

[27] Ekkehard Mühlenberg, 'Das Verständniss des Bösen in neuplatonischer und frühchristlicher Sicht', *Kerygma und Dogma* 15/1 (1969), 226–38.

[28] E. Mühlenberg, 'Verité et bonté de Dieu: une interprétation du *De Incarnatione*, chapitre 4, en perspective historique', in *Gott in der Geschichte. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*,

Although it remains a matter of discussion whether Augustine adopted Origen's metaphysical framework (the fall of the soul and the *apokatastasis pantoon*),[29] his early writings testify that he did share Clement and Origen's pedagogical understanding of salvation history and the function of divine judgement within it. This raises the first question of our investigation: how does Augustine relate to this pedagogical understanding of punishment in his early writings and how does his thought develop up until the *Confessions*? I will argue that Augustine initially adopted a pedagogical approach, in which God's punishment of sin is by nature instructive (presupposing the freedom of the will), but gradually comes to disconnect this combination of punishment and mercy. Only for the predestined, who have been liberated from the law of death in the body of Christ, does God's judgment have pedagogical effects. In this regard, Augustine departed from the Origenist tradition by upholding its theodicy without upholding its belief in human free will.[30]

Philosophical Psychagogy

As observed in the previous section, Christian apologists presented Christianity in close connection to the Hellenistic culture of education. Augustine shared in this culture. He received a classical literary education, and after his reading of Cicero, he acquainted himself with important philosophical schools. In order to understand Augustine's view of how God's judgement relates to his mercy, it is helpful to briefly sketch some pedagogical ideas with which Augustine must have been acquainted.

Before I address the tradition of philosophical psychagogy that Augustine inherited via Cicero and other sources, I will make a few remarks about the use of (corporeal) punishment within the context of education. In the education of children corporeal punishment was not uncommon.[31] Augustine himself

edited by E. Mühlenberg (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2008), 215–28 (223–4). Cf. Athanasius, *Contra gentes*, 1–10; *De Incarnatione*, 20.

[29] Robert O'Connell has argued that the early Augustine did teach the fall of the soul theory to explain the present existence of humanity in the body. Others scholars such as Goulven Madec, Frederick van Fleteren, and Gerard O'Daly have contradicted him. The discussion continues up to the present day and is well summarized by Ronny Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell and his Critics* (Washington, DC: University of America Press, 2006). Recently, Iliari Ramelli ('Origen in Augustine: A Paradoxical Reception', *Numen* 60 (2013), 280–307) has argued that Augustine taught the doctrine of *apokatastasis pantoon* in his early years, probably without knowing that it derived from Origen. She bases her argument mainly on *mor.* 2,7,9, CSEL 90,95: '*Dei bonitas . . . omnia deficientia sic ordinat, ut ibi sint ubi congruentissime possint esse, donec ordinatis motibus ad id recurrant unde defecerunt.*'

[30] Bammell, 'Augustine, Origen and the Exegesis of St. Paul', 350–1.

[31] H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Nouvelle Édition; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1947), 397–9; Christian Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 143.

experienced this custom at school.[32] The same applied to the custom of beating children at home. Philosophically, the use of the whip against children was justified on the basis of the assumption that they lacked reason. Greek and Roman writers regularly compare children to animals and postulate that because they are incapable of controlling their passions, they cannot be expected to act on the basis of reason. Therefore, they have to be domesticated by fear of punishment.

In theory, children did not differ from slaves. Both were held in check through fear of punishment.[33] However, in practice, children had a different status from slaves; they were their parent's own flesh and blood, and represented the family's hope for the future. Furthermore, corporeal punishment was generally regarded as violating someone's dignity.[34] To flog or whip someone was to degrade him to the status of a slave or a low-class person. Therefore, in the case of freeborn children, whipping represented a paradox to the aristocratic mind.[35] An aristocratic Roman father regarded his son as someone who should be educated to become an honourable citizen. As such, he desired to avoid making him into a fearful and subservient person by treating him as a slave. So the goal of chastisement was to advance filial loyalty, rather than merely to instil fear and confirm hierarchy.[36]

Mere retributive punishments characterized the relationship between slaves and their owners and between rulers and their subjects. Slaves were simply punished in order to affirm and preserve the hierarchical relationship. In legal cases, punishment was applied for the sake of restoring justice. If a person did not possess Roman citizenship, a magistrate could even flog him without a legal case,[37] just for the sake of preserving order.[38] Outside of the classroom and the family, corporeal punishment thus only had a retributive, repressive function (*coercitio*).

Augustine also became acquainted with the tradition of philosophical psychagogy, the cure of the soul by training the mind in rational thinking. Cicero mediated to him a Platonic-Socratic understanding of philosophy as a way of healing the soul from its irrational passions.[39] Plato taught that the

[32] *conf.* 1,13–14. [33] Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire*, 143–4.

[34] Th. de Bruyn, 'Flogging a Son: The Emergence of the *pater flagellans* in Latin Christian Discourse', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7/2 (1999), 249–90 (259).

[35] Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire*, 144.

[36] Richard Saller, 'Corporeal Punishment, Authority and Obedience in the Roman Household', in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, edited by Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 143–65 (161).

[37] Roman citizens had the right of *prouocatio*, the appeal to the court in order to receive a fair hearing. See Saller, 'Corporeal Punishment', 155–6.

[38] Flogging was feared by everyone, because it had a symbolic connection to slavery, the loss of Roman *dignitas*.

[39] Paul Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 69. For Cicero's understanding of philosophy as *medicina animi*, see *Tusc. Disp.* 3,3; 3,10–11.

human soul currently suffers under the passions, caused by wrong judgements that it had contracted through custom and upbringing. Therefore, the soul had to be converted from the world of common opinion (*doxa*) to the world of the ideas, where plain truth (*alètheia*) was to be found.[40] By remembering its knowledge of the ideas (*anamnesis*), the soul could heal itself from irrationality and act according to the truth. Plato compared philosophy to medicine and the philosophical teacher to a doctor, who needed to know the state of his patient's soul in order to apply the right treatment.[41] Over against the sophists, he stated that rhetoric should serve this medical purpose. Words should not be used to win the crowds for oneself, but to liberate the crowds from their errors. This could imply painful surgery, as the philosophical rhetor deprived his patients of their most cherished opinions about the good. Nonetheless, this severe discipline served their ultimate interest: the return of the soul from the external world, to itself, in order to delight in the truth alone.

In his reflections on the state and on citizenship, Plato also reserved a place for (corporeal) punishment in the process of philosophical education. Starting from the Socratic principle that all sin results from ignorance, he wonders on what basis punishment could be justified. A retributive understanding of punishment is to be rejected, as this presupposes that the sin is done voluntarily, and this is exactly what Plato denies. Therefore, for Plato, punishment can only be justified as a cure of the disease of ignorance. If someone does something wrong, the rational mind is to be regarded as suffering atrophy through the swelling of the lower parts of the soul. Punishment is a chirurgical measure to release the mind from the suppressing power of the passions. At the same time, this punishment has a deterrent character for the body politic at large.[42] In Plato, as in other philosophers, education and restraint are not in opposition to each other. The former rather serves the latter.

Plato's therapeutic understanding of philosophy as medicine of the mind had become mainstream among philosophical schools in the Hellenistic

[40] Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 23.

[41] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia. Die Formung des Griechischen Menschen*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1959[3]), 292.

[42] On this twofold function of punishment, see *Gorgias* 525B. Cf. E. Barker, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Dover, 1959), 204. Plato's project was to ascribe to the state itself an educating function. He observed that lawgivers usually acted as slave doctors who merely prescribed a medicine for a particular illness (i.e. punishment) without examining the actual health situation of the patient. Plato proposed that lawgivers needed to be true doctors who examined the health situation of the patient, not only to cure, but also to prevent further illness. In other words, lawgivers needed to be educators. For this reason, he thought that the ideal state had to be governed by philosophers. Punishment and restraint needed to have a pedagogical, rather than a mere retributive purpose (Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. 3, 291–3). Simultaneously, he denied that virtue could be attained by mere 'character formation', because it depended on a direct vision of the good. Nonetheless, good example and restraint of the lower soul could have an ancillary function in gaining this vision of the good. Cf. R. F. Stalley, 'Punishment in the Protagoras', *Phronèsis* 40/1 (1995), 1–19 (17–19).

world, even if their respective views of happiness differed.[43] Seneca, for example, depicted himself in his letters to Lucilius as a medical doctor trying to heal his pupil's soul from irrational passions, implanted in him by his pupil's upbringing.[44] By disciplining his mind in Stoic doctrine, the student can heal his soul and acquire a stable place in the world.[45] Cicero applied this understanding of philosophy to the bond of friendship in general. In classical thought friendship was based on mutual respect for each other's character and was aimed at perfecting this character in virtue. Therefore, 'friends frequently must be not only advised (*monendi*), but also rebuked (*obiurgandi sunt*), and both advice and rebuke should be kindly received when given in a spirit of goodwill'.[46] Because the love of truth binds friends together, a good friend does not remain silent to his companion if the latter violates the truth. Therefore, Cicero says, sometimes bitter-tongued enemies can be better than sweet-smiling friends[47]—a judgement that Augustine himself repeats in *Confessions* 9,18.[48] With regard to authorities applying punishment, Cicero emphasizes that an office bearer should exterminate any feeling of vengeance in his mind, and be motivated by the correction of the other person, and the good of the community.[49]

Painful pedagogy was not merely perceived as something that took place between humans. Among both Stoic and Neoplatonist philosophers it was common to perceive the entire universe as pedagogical in nature. They believed that the world was governed by providence, a spiritual power that imposed order on matter, either understood as the divine spirit that pervades the material world (Stoics), or as a lower hypostasis flowing from the one (Plotinus). Man is a composite of reason and matter, and must mirror the ordering power of providence by ruling over the passions of the body. In order to do so, the wise man must resist the inclination to become dependent upon the things that change, but rather move along with nature (Stoics), and, in the case of Plotinian Neoplatonism, attempt to achieve contact with the undescended part of the soul in the contemplation of the One.[50] Whenever the soul suffers from passions, this is the result of irrational attachments to the external world. By giving himself over to the interests of the body, the soul errs

[43] Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 41.

[44] Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 46–50.

[45] Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 56.

[46] Cicero, *Laelius De amicita*, 24,88: '*. . . et monendi amici saepe sunt et obiurgandi, et haec accipienda amice, cum benevole fiunt*' (Loeb, 197).

[47] Cicero, *Laelius De amicita*, 24,90, 199.

[48] *conf.* 9,17: 'Even as friends by their flattery pervert, so do enemies by their taunts often correct us' (NPNF 1, 136).

[49] *De officiis*, 1,33; 88–9 (Loeb, 35–7; 89–91).

[50] J. Rief, *Der Ordobegriff des jungen Augustinus* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1962), 56–73.

and experiences universal justice (*dikè*) in the sufferings that result from it.[51] Simultaneously, however, this suffering admonishes the soul to return to itself and heal itself from its lapse into irrational behaviour. Furthermore, it makes the soul vigilant not to lapse again into the same mistakes, and it exercises the soul in virtue. In response to the question why the good so often suffer, Seneca responds: 'Those whom the deity supports and loves, he hardens, he examines, he proves.'[52] Providence chastises (*uerberare*), afflicts (*lacerare*), and probes (*probare*) in order to train the power of the virtuous man.[53] The same idea is expressed by Plotinus when he speaks about the use of evil in *Enn.* 3,2,5.[54] The soul comes to suffer when it transgresses the order of its nature, when it inclines towards that what is worse than itself. This is its righteous punishment (*dikè*), imposed on it by universal law. Good souls profit from this experience, 'for it makes men awake and wakes up the intelligence and understanding of those who are opposed to the ways of wickedness, and makes us learn what a good virtue is by comparison with the evils of which the wicked have a share.'[55] The idea of a chastising providence, which we might associate with Christianity, was thus not at all uncommon among classical philosophers.[56]

Augustine received the aforementioned classical pedagogical ideas through his education, but he processed them as a Christian thinker. Starting out as a Christian philosopher, his thought is increasingly influenced by the Bible and the Christian tradition. This study seeks to answer te question of how Augustine relates to the aforementioned philosophical ideas in het development of his thought on the salvific meaning of divine judgement.

Law and Punishment in Augustine's Thought on Salvation

Law and grace

What does this study contribute to existing discussions in Augustine research?

Since Augustine's own time interpreters of his work have disagreed on the question whether Augustine taught a consistent doctrine of grace throughout the course of his career. Augustine made a plea for his own consistency in the *Retractationes*, but not all have found his apology convincing, from the

[51] Norbert Scholl, *Providentia. Untersuchungen zur Vorhersehunglehre bei Plotin und Augustin* (Inaugural Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, 1960), 71, 100.

[52] Seneca, *De prouidentia*, 4,7: 'Hos itaque deus quos probat, quos amat indurat recognoscit exercet' (translation: Loeb, 28–9).

[53] Seneca, *De prouidentia*, 4,12 (Loeb, 30–1).

[54] Norbert Scholl, *Providentia*, 100–1.

[55] Plotinus, *Ennead*, 3,2,5 (translation: Loeb, 61).

[56] For Augustine's use of Stoic and Neoplatonic commonplaces in his doctrine of providence, see Henry Chadwick, 'Providence and the Problem of Evil in Augustine', in *Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione, Roma, 15–20 settembre 1986*, vol. 1 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987), 153–62.

Pelagians of his own days to present-day Augustine scholars.[57] In the second half of the twentieth century, Peter Brown's reconstruction of Augustine's early development became influential in Augustinian scholarship.[58] He argued that Augustine started out as a Christian Platonist, espousing an ideal of Christian perfection, based upon a synergism between grace and the power of free will, but gradually discovered, both through his polemics with the Manichees (who espoused a rather negative view of the human condition and supported their views by appealing to the writings of Paul) and his congregational experiences as a young presbyter, that the bright future he had envisioned for himself remained unattainable on this earth. Humanity lay down as a wounded man at the side of the road to eternity, and was completely dependent upon God's electing mercy to reach the fatherland. Brown regarded Augustine's rereading of Paul in the 390s and his congregational experiences as having caused a rupture both in his anthropology and in his understanding of grace. Brown's reconstruction of the development of Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace was adopted by other scholars, such as Paula Frederiksen in her dissertation on Augustine's early reception of Paul and Kurt Flasch in his edition of and commentary on *Ad Simplicianum*.[59]

James Wetzel also belongs to this tradition of scholarship. In his book *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* he argues that Augustine's early view of the human will and its capacities is Stoic. Wetzel contends that Augustine, before he became a priest, firmly believed in the human power of self-determination. Nothing is so much in the power of man as the will itself. According to Wetzel, Augustine's ongoing polemics with the Manichees in the 390s led to the insight that the philosophers' view of man's subjectivity elevates man above time, and doesn't do justice to the temporal nature of human willing. He gradually discovered that man always bears the wrong perception of the good in his memory (*consuetudo*), and does not have an 'eternal core' by which he is able to emancipate himself from his own past. Only through an

[57] For different positions, see Anthony Dupont, 'Continuity or Discontinuity in Augustine? Is There an Early Augustine and What is His View of Grace?', *Ars Disputandi* 8 (2008), 67–79 (esp. 67–9).

[58] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (New Edition with An Epilogue; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 139–50. This is not to say that before Brown this topic had not been discussed by Augustine scholars. I limit myself here to a brief sketch of developments in the second half of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century. For older works on Augustine's doctrine of grace, see for example K. Janssen, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1936); A. Niebergall, *Augustins Anschuung von der Gnade. Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung vor dem Pelgianischen Streit* (bis zum Abschluss der Confessiones) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951).

[59] K. Flasch, *Logik des Schreckens. De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum 1,2* [Lateinisch–Deutsch] (Excerpta Classica 8; Mainz: Dieterich, 1990); Paula Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis Princeton University, 1979).

ongoing recollection of the good (which from God's perspective is grace), will he finally reach integrity again in God's eternity.[60]

There were also other voices, however, who argued for more continuity in Augustine's thought. For example, in 1996 Pierre-Marie Hombert published a study in which he argued that Augustine's theology, from its beginnings until its end, can be characterized as to glorify God in his grace, and excluding all boasting in human merit. This feature, Hombert argued, is present in Augustine's writings from the very beginning, and finds its mature expression in Augustine's reading of Paul in the 390s, especially in *Ad Simplicianum*.[61] In a study published around the same time, Volker Henning Drecoll argued that Augustine's understanding of grace is derived from his view of God as all defining, and unchangeable Creator.[62] This idea can be traced back even to the Cassiciacum Dialogues, and is fully developed by Augustine in *De uera religione* (390), long before he begins to comment on Romans and Galatians. It was Carol Harrison who explicitly took Brown's thesis as her 'target' in her 2006 book *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*. She can be seen as the most outspoken proponent of the continuity-thesis. With Drecoll she thinks that the distinction between God as Creator and man as creature forms the basis of Augustine's theology of sin and grace. Humanity falls away from God, almost by nature, as it was created *ex nihilo*. God the Creator is the only one who can save us from our fall into nothingness, as he is the only one who creates out of nothing. According to Harrison, Augustine found these ideas affirmed by Paul when he started to read the apostle in the 390s. Paul did not change his views on sin and grace, but rather affirmed them, although Augustine struggled for a while with the problem of free will, and for a moment solved this problem by defending the idea that God's predestination is based upon his foreknowledge of faith.[63] Recent books by Lenka Karfikova and Jarzinho Lopez Pereira have returned to a more 'Brownian' approach to the early Augustine's doctrine of grace.[64]

This study intends to contribute to this discussion by asking the question how God's law and his punishment feature in Augustine's understanding of

[60] James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[61] Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae: se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce* (Collection des études augustiniennes; Série Antiquité 148; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1996).

[62] Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 355.

[63] Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74–114 ('creation from nothing').

[64] Lenka Karfikova, *Grace and the Will according to Augustine* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 9–82; Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner* (Refo500 Academic Studies, vol. 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 81–121.

the operation of grace. Thus far, this question has received little attention in the above-mentioned discussions. My contention in this study is that the shift in Augustine's thinking is not absolute, but gradual. Although he believes from the beginning in human fallenness and the need for the re-creation of the entire human person, he gradually moves from a more philosophical-pedagogical approach to salvation (inherited from the Greek apologetic tradition) to an approach in which faith in Christ and his atoning death on the cross become more central to his thinking.

Augustine's view of temporal punishment as a means to conversion

Another discussion related to the previous one concerns the origin of Augustine's justification of state-sponsored coercion of the Donatists. In the Donatist controversy Augustine presented a theological justification of the penalties that were issued by the Edict of Unity of 405 against those who remained in the Donatist party. Against the Donatist objection that adherence to a religion is based upon the free choice of the will, Augustine argued that God could use violence and the threat of punishment to restrain the power of habit and effect reflection and eventually conversion. Although he had feared that the use of force would yield faint conversions, when he had seen its effects on the Donatists in Hippo, he became convinced that God had indeed used this means to inspire genuine conversions (cf. *ep.* 93).

In the discussion on the evolution of Augustine's thought on this matter, scholars such as Peter Brown, Sandra Lee-Dixon, and Kurt Flasch have argued that Augustine first rejected coercion, because he still had high expectations of human rationality and free will. In the course of his development as a Christian theologian, however, he became more and more convinced of the power of habit (*uis consuetudinis*) over the human mind. Along with this development, he increasingly perceived conversion as a process (rather than as matter of immediate self-determination) in which external inconveniences have a preparatory function. As Peter Brown has it: 'In his thought, the final, spontaneous act of the will could be preceded by a long process—of *eruditio* and *admonitio*—in which elements of fear, of constraint, of external inconvenience are never, at any time, excluded.'[65] Augustine did not perceive the use of external force and the fear it induced as opposed to rational teaching and free choice, but rather as enabling the mind to become teachable (*docilis*), and reflect upon its habits in the light of the truth.

At the same time, Augustine stressed, particularly after he had written *Ad Simplicianum*, that only God decided in whom these external means led to

[65] Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 270.

conversion, and who were merely hardened in their unbelief. Brown argues that this doctrine of predestination provided Augustine with a new argument to justify the use of external force against the Donatists. Whereas he had formerly feared that the use of external force would foster half-hearted conversions, the doctrine of predestination would have relieved Augustine's conscience. He could leave the *ficti* to God.[66] Likewise, Sandra Lee-Dixon has defended this view of the early Augustine. Following Brown, she argues that the early Augustine still believed that (the threat of) temporal punishment was not conducive to conversion, because it would draw people only to outward obedience, whereas inwardly they would continue to cling to their inferior loves. Therefore, only teaching of the good could be an effective means to conversion (with reference to *ep.* 22 and 35).[67] When Augustine started writing the *Confessions*, however, he would have come to stress the idea that habit can be so strong in human beings that they are not even 'teachable'. They find themselves *ante legem*, and the question is how can they be influenced in such a way that they are brought *sub lege*? Dixon's answer is that Augustine came to regard (the threat of) suffering as an effective means to this end.[68] Only when sin is curbed through external threats can one facilitate the possibility of reflection and an openness to teaching.

Brown and others have observed, however, that the idea of external force as somehow conducive to human salvation is present in Augustine before the 390s. Brown writes: 'From his earliest works, morally neutral impingements, such as the fear of death or the inconveniences of the life of the senses, are accepted as part of the "pulchritudo justitiae" of a universe in which this force of habit may be broken in men.'[69] This has also been observed by Carol

[66] A similar but less nuanced case has been made by Kurt Flasch. He argues that the doctrine of predestination *caused* Augustine to justify coercion in the name of God. His argument runs as follows. Predestination meant for Augustine that God disregarded human free will in the process of salvation. This justified his human servants following God by violating the freedom of their fellow men. As God had ordained the use of fear to save the predestined, his human servants were allowed to foster this process by coercion. Thus, the image of God as arbitrary, 'coercive' ruler was transferred to humans. This would explain the history of intolerance in Western Europe. A characteristic quote: 'Je mehr Augustin die natürliche Sittlichkeit und den römischen Staat entwertete, je armseliger ihm der freie Wille der Unbegnadeten erschien, um so mehr verlegte er jeden wertvollen Inhalt, alle wirkliche Erfüllung in die Gnade. Ihr zu Hilfe zu kommen, und sei es mit rabiatten Massnahmen, war allemal legitimiert.' (Flasch, *Logik des Schreckens*, 119). For his argument, see pp. 114–20.

[67] S. Lee-Dixon, *The Many Layers of Meaning in Moral Arguments: A Self Psychological Case Study of Augustine's Arguments for Coercion*, vols 1–2 (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1993), 401, with reference to *mor.* 1,64, CSEL 90, 68: '*Merito apud te [= ecclesia catholica] uisum est, quam sit sub lege operatio uana, cum libido animum uastat et cohibetur poenae metu, non amore uirtutis obruitur.*'

[68] Lee-Dixon, *The Many Layers*, 402–3.

[69] Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 271. Brown also points to Augustine's use of the word *disciplina.* Augustine used this word to refer to God's chastisement of Israel, and also used it to characterize God's pedagogical intentions with the imperial laws issued against the Donatists.

Harrison, who has placed the 'remedial' impact of external inconveniences in the context of Augustine's doctrine of providence. This idea, which she calls 'the assault of grace',[70] is already discernible in the Cassiciacum Dialogues, and comes to full maturity in the *Confessions*.

Furthermore, Augustine regarded his later justification of state-sponsored coercion of the Donatists as a form of church discipline.[71] This is illustrated, for example, by Augustine's use of the word *correptio* rather than *coercitio* to describe the function of the imperial laws.[72] This also explains why he admonished state officials to exercise Christian mildness (*mansuetudo*) in their execution of the laws. They should intend to attain the cure of the sinner, rather than his repression. These insights have brought Frederick Russell to argue that Augustine's justification of the coercion of the Donatists should be viewed as part of a broader theology of persuasion by the Church. The Church intends to carve pathways to the human soul, and for that purpose uses different 'modalities of coercion', from teaching to threatening, to actual punishment, in order to foster a process of reflection in the mind of the sinner.[73] These insights show that Augustine's thought on the usefulness of temporal punishment belongs to a broader network of ideas on methods of persuasion. This study aims to describe what place and function Augustine attributes to temporal punishment, both as part of divine providence and as part of ecclesiastical discipline, and describe the development of his thought in conversation with the aforementioned scholars.

Punishment as pedagogical instrument in the Old and the New Testament

It has further been argued that the development of Augustine's thought on the usefulness of temporal punishment can be explained by a change in his view

[70] See Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 250–2. See also Carol Harrison, 'The Assault of Grace in Augustine's Early Works', in *Studia Patristica* 43, edited by F. Young, M. Edwards, and S. Parvis (Peeters: Leuven,2006), 113–17; Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 255ff.

[71] Brown, 'Attitude', 275; R. A. Markus, *Saeculum,* 140; H. I. Marrou, '*Doctrina* et *Disciplina* dans la langue des Pères de l'Église, *ALMA, Bulletin Du Cange* 9 (1934), 5–25 (19).

[72] Brown, 'Attitude', 275. Cf. M. Gaumer and A. Dupont, 'Donatist North Africa and the Beginnings of Religious Coercion by Christians: A New Analysis', *La Ciudad de Dios*, 223/2 (2010), 445–66.

[73] Frederick H. Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's Coercion by Words', in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, edited by William E Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 116. Russell argues that Augustine regards thinking (*cogitare*) as the result of forcible action of the mind on memory (*cogo*). At this point, Augustine's theory of signs plays an important role. External signs intend to make the person who receives the sign turn inside in order to seek a reality that already exists in his memory. Cf. R. A. Markus, 'Augustine on Signs', *Phronèsis* 2/1 (1957), 60–83; P. Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

on the relationship between the Old and the New Testament. Brown remarks that mere physical fear, which Augustine defended in his anti-Donatist polemics, seems to be void of religious implications. Augustine's usual appreciation of 'fear and trembling' as religious motive has to do with a fear of God himself, whereas the fear of temporal punishment seems not to have any religious benefits. Brown suggests that Augustine's position can only be understood if we understand his attitude towards the Old Testament. 'The attitude which they [Augustine and his contemporaries] adopted to the present was, in large part, moulded and defined by their attitude to this distant past.'[74] In his anti-Donatist polemic, Augustine uses examples from the Old Testament—such as Moses, Elijah, and Nebuchadnezzar—and argues that the severity that they exercised, although more prominent in the time of the Old Testament, is not principally limited to that time. This position of Augustine had deeper roots in his anti-Manichaean polemics. Already in his polemics against the Manichees, he had defended the idea that the severity of the Old Testament was not principally limited to that dispensation. Although the coercive quality of the Old Testament pedagogue needed the grace of Christ, it remained useful also after the coming of Christ. 'And so,' Brown concludes, 'the concrete example of the people of Israel, with their enforced laws, could come very close indeed to the ecclesiastical realities of Augustine's North Africa.'[75] However, according to Brown, Augustine had not always held this position. In his works before 394, Augustine would have regarded the Old Testament as a distinct 'stage' in the moral development of the human race, which had now been transcended after the coming of Christ.[76] The perspective of the later Augustine, however, 'did not admit such an irreversible moral ascent. Because of this, perhaps, Augustine could see the *utilitas timoris* of the old law, not as a remote "period", reflecting an alien "*gradus morum*", so much as a continuous and necessary complement of the grace of the New dispensation.'[77]

Following this line of thought, Augustine also increasingly connected the Church and the State, after the example of the Old Testament, now picturing Christ as the King of kings, rather than the humble teacher 'who did nothing by force'.[78] Christ used the rulers of this age to serve the discipline of the

[74] Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 272.

[75] Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 274.

[76] A similar opposition between Old and New Testament is suggested by Hübner, 'Disciplina', 461 and Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians*, 44: 'Among New Testament writers, it was Paul who was most manifestly concerned with the function and practice of rebuke and correction in the Christian community. Whereas the God of the Old Testament was a palpable presence in the lives of his children, prone to rage and regularly swooping in to rebuke them for their sins, the God of the New Testament is an invisible but transcendent presence. For the most part, the responsibility for correcting sin in the Christian community falls on scripture (that is, the textual incarnation of the transcendent God) and on one's Christian brothers.'

[77] Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 273.

[78] *uera rel.* 31.

Church, just as the Old Testament kings had done. This brings us to the question: to what extent is this development in Augustine's thought discernible in his early writings? How does his thought on temporal punishment as pedagogical instrument in the history of salvation, and God's use of human authorities, develop in the course of his writings? This study argues that there is more continuity in Augustine's thinking than the aforementioned scholars have acknowledged.

OUTLINE AND METHOD

The previous sections addressed the most important questions that arise out of Augustine's own context and the context of Augustinian scholarship. Before embarking on the actual journey through Augustine's life and early writings, let me summarize the research question that leads us through his works and the subquestions attached to it.

Research Question

How does Augustine conceive of the function of judgement (the revelation of God's law and its sanctions) in the process of salvation between Cassiciacum and the *Confessions*?

Subquestions

1) How does Augustine relate to the anti-Gnostic tradition, which, out of a desire to reconcile God's goodness and his justice, presented the divine punishment of sin as part of a pedagogical project, in which human free will cooperates with the divine teaching?
2) How does Augustine use elements from the tradition of philosophical pedagogy? Which elements does he use and where does he take a specifically Christian path?
3) What is the place and function of punishment in Augustine's understanding of the operation of grace? And is it true that Augustine develops from initially being a defender of free will and rational persuasion to being a proponent of external coercion? Does he indeed change his view on the relationship between the Old and the New Testament with regard to the use of temporal punishment?

The method that is followed in this study is chronological-systematic. First, I have divided Augustine's life in different chronological stages. The second chapter addresses Augustine's thought on the topic of this book at Cassiciacum, the third chapter describes his thought during the period between his baptism and his ordination (387–91), the fourth chapter reviews the development of his thought during the period of his priesthood until his ordination as bishop (391–7). The fifth addresses the *Confessions* and has a different character from the previous ones. It does not so much follow the development of Augustine's thought, but rather asks how his thought up to this point in his life (at the start of his episcopate) is reflected in his theological autobiography. How do the insights that Augustine gained on the redemptive meaning of divine judgement function in the narrative of God's dealings with him before and after his conversion? The systematic character of the study is reflected in the set-up of the chapters. In each chapter I have assembled the themes that play a role in that particular period of Augustine's life. This method enables me to both answer the main question of this book (and the subquestions), and identify the development in Augustine's thinking against the background of the different contexts in which he worked during the first ten years after his conversion.

The choice to limit my research to writings from Cassiciacum to the *Confessions* is prompted by the necessity to limit myself, but also by the consideration that this is one of the most transformative periods in Augustine's life as a Christian thinker. This makes it a very appropriate period to study the development of his thought on a particular subject. Furthermore, during this stage of his life he was most engaged in the controversy with the Manichees; it was their dualism that challenged him to contemplate God's judgement of sin and how this judgement relates to the way God effects human salvation.

2

Cassiciacum

The Discipline of Fortune and Dialogue

THE RETREAT TO CASSICIACUM

Some time after his conversion in the garden of Milan, Augustine took a time of leisure at the estate of his friend Verecundus in Cassiciacum. This retreat was caused by violent divine intervention. This is at least how Augustine himself presents it in the Cassiciacum Dialogues. Although he had already decided to leave his position as rhetor in Milan after reading the books of the Platonists and Paul,[1] he was withheld by the judgement of certain people (*nonnulorum hominum existimatio*),[2] probably important men from the court, or the parents of his pupils. However, a 'chest pain' (*pectoris dolor*),[3] forced him to abandon his position and take a time of leasure at the villa of his friend Verecundus in Cassiciacum.[4] Taking periods of leisure to dedicate

[1] In *conf.* 7,26–7 Augustine relates that he first read the *libri Platonicorum* and then Paul. The early Dialogues confirm this. In *beata u.* 4 he says that he first read 'a few books (of Plotinus)' ((*Plotini*) *paucissimi libri*) and then compared them to the 'authority of them who have handed over the divine mysteries' (*illorum auctoritate, qui diuina mysteria tradiderunt*). In *Acad.* 2,5 he mentions 'certain books full of good things from Arabia' (*libri quidam pleni … bonas res arabicas*), which brought him back to the religion that was planted in him from his youth, in the very marrow of his bones. Consequently, he took up Paul and read him carefully. Both passages indicate that Augustine understood Platonism as standing in the service of his return to Christianity.

[2] *beata u.* 4, CCL 29,67: '*Lectis autem Plotini paucissimis libris, cuius te esse studiosissimum accepi, conlataque cum eis, quantum potui, etiam illorum auctoritate, qui diuina mysteria tradiderunt, sic exarsi, ut omnes illas uellem ancoras rumpere, nisi me nonnullorum hominum existimatio commoueret.*'

[3] *Acad.* 1,3; *beata u.* 4; *ord.* 1,5 (where Augustine calls his illness a *stomachi dolor*). I discuss the meaning of Augustine's *pectoris dolor* in footnote 45.

[4] For a discussion of the location of Cassiciacum and for a general treatment of the form and function of the Dialogues, their historicity, and the themes discussed therein, see Gerard J. P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', in: *A-L* 771–81; J. Doignon, 'État de questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de Saint Augustin', in *Internationales Symposium über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung*, edited by Petrus Mayer and Carl Heinz Chelius (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1989), 47–86.

oneself to philosophy was not uncommon amongst noblemen in Late Antiquity,[5] but for Augustine it inaugurated a complete abandonment of life in the world. He wanted to leave behind all the desires that had burdened him during his life in the world, both sexual and political, in order to seek the truth that transcends this mortal life and to find happiness in its enjoyment.[6]

In Cassiciacum he dedicated himself, with his mother Monnica, his son Adeodatus, his brother Navigius, and his pupils Licentius and Trygetius, to the study of philosophy. His understanding of philosophy in the Cassiciacum Dialogues already reflects the Christian nature of his conversion.[7] Although Augustine borrows much from Neoplatonic and Stoic traditions in his Dialogues, he explicitly presents himself as a Christian thinker. This becomes clear from the fact that prayer and Scripture reading have an important place in Cassiciacum, alongside readings of classical authors and philosophical disputations. Moreover, Augustine writes that, although he holds Neoplatonic philosophy in high esteem and uses its methods for spiritual purification, the authority of Christ is of primary importance to him.[8] These data justify a reading of the Cassiciacum Dialogues as Augustine's first attempt to present

[5] Cf. Dennis Trout, 'Otium Honestum and the Social Dimensions of Conversion', *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 132–46.

[6] *Acad.* 2,4.

[7] During the twentieth century, there was a vehement discussion on the question of what Augustine's conversion of 386 actually consisted of. Harnack, Alfaric, and others argued that Augustine in fact converted to Neoplatonism. Others, like Gercken, took the opposite position, emphasizing the Christian character of Augustine's Cassiciacum writings. A middle position was adopted by Jens Nörregaard, who argued for a Neoplatonic and a Christian line of thought, creatively combined by Augustine himself. Pierre Courcelle criticized these approaches for the fact that they all regarded Neoplatonism and Christianity as clearly distinguished entities. He argued that Augustine encountered in Milan a form of Christianity that had integrated important aspects of Neoplatonic thought, which helped him to overcome his intellectual problems with Christianity (Pièrre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les confessions d'Augustin* (Paris: E. De Boccard, 1950), 252). It should, however, be noted that the Milanese circle to which Augustine was introduced was not a unitary whole (Goulven Madec, *Petites Études augustiniennes* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1994), 38). For example, Manlius Theodorus seems to have taken a position more distanced from the Church and its doctrine than Ambrose and Simplicianus. Hence, Augustine had to grapple with the tensions that existed within this circle. I am convinced, however, that, although Augustine had to grow in his knowledge of Christianity at the time of his conversion, the basic discovery of Christ as mediator over against Neoplatonic philosophy, as narrated in *conf.* 7 (*ibi legi… ibi non legi*) can already be discerned in the Dialogues. For an overview of the scholarly discussion, see Goulven Madec, 'Le Néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin: état d'une question centenaire (depuis Harnack et Boissier 1888)', in *Internationales Symposium über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung*, edited by Cornelius Mayer and Carl Heinz Chelius (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1989), 9–25; see also the comprehensive, but useful survey of positions in Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 82–6. For a more elaborate overview of Augustine's relation to the Church and its teachings at Cassiciacum, see David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications 386–391* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 40–58.

[8] *Acad.* 3, 42.

himself as a student and teacher of Christianity to the diverse network of his Christian, Manichaean, and Pagan friends and acquaintances in Milan.[9]

In the following I will attempt to demonstrate how Augustine speaks of the salvific function of God's disciplinary response to human sin in the Cassiciacum Dialogues. I will first address Augustine's discourse on the disciplinary force of divine providence. I will argue that Augustine, although he regularly refers to God's providence under the pagan name *fortuna* (perhaps having in mind his pagan readers from Milan), proves to have a Christian understanding of it.[10] He wants to make clear that through the buffetings of fortune, the personal God of Christianity himself awakens fallen souls and urges them to call upon him as he has made himself accessible in Christ. A second context in which Augustine exemplifies the redemptive meaning of corrective judgement is in the dialogues that he organizes for his pupils. A third context in which I will investigate the salvific meaning of divine discipline is in Augustine's descriptions of the ascent of the soul.

THE ASSAULT OF FORTUNE

Augustine's Philosophical Ideal

In order to understand the purpose of God's disciplinary activity, we need to ask how Augustine perceives the purpose for which the human soul was created, and its estrangement from this purpose through sin.

Augustine believes that man exists to become happy (*beatus*), and that all people are driven by the desire to attain happiness. But what is the happy life and how do we attain it? In *De beata uita* Augustine defines the happy life as the perpetual possession of an object that cannot be lost against our will. This object should be independent of fortune, the power that gives and takes

[9] Laura Holt, 'Wisdom's Teacher: Augustine at Cassiciacum', *Augustinian Studies* 29/2 (1998), 47–60.

[10] In the Dialogues, Augustine often refers to God's providence with the pagan word *fortuna*. He regrets this in his *Retractationes* (1,1,3 and 2, 2; 1,3,2). However, as he also indicates there, already during his time in Cassiciacum he believed that what we call 'chance' was in fact part of God's hidden providence (*Acad.* 1,1). In general, Augustine uses *fortuna* as referring to worldly prosperity (*beata u.* 25) or mishap (*beata u.* 2). It is the power that gives and takes away temporal things (*beata u.* 10). For Augustine, who is already a Christian, this is the power of God the Creator who governs human lives. This power is feared by those who are not yet perfected in virtue (*Acad.* 1, 20: *fortunam metuere*; *beata u.* 28: *timere fortunam*). For this interpretation of *fortuna* in the Dialogues, see Goulven Madec, 'Thématique augustinienne de la Providence', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 41/2 (1995), 291–308 (291–2); Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 240.

temporal goods.[11] If the soul remains attached to what can be taken from it against its will, it will suffer fear and grief, need and anger. Only if the soul is nourished by a good that cannot be taken from it against its own will will it enjoy tranquility. Augustine concludes that only God himself can be the true nourishment of the soul, because he is detached from the flux of time, and the power of fortune. The soul is impoverished when it turns to 'that which flows, dissolves, melts and as it were always perishes'.[12] It becomes saturated when it is nourished by supreme being and truth, which is God himself. At the end of the dialogue, Augustine concludes that we will possess the happy life when we fully enjoy God.[13] This is a stage in which man is free from attachment to bodily passions. He takes care of the body, but his happiness does not depend on it.

In *De ordine* Augustine defines happiness in similar terms to those in *De beata uita*, but now from the perspective of providence and evil. When people see evil in the universe, they either conclude from this that God does not govern the universe or that God is not good.[14] The real problem, however, is the sickness of the soul itself. The irrational soul, occupied with the particulars of temporal life, cannot perceive order—and instead of blaming itself for this mistake, it blames God. We will only reach the happy life if the law according to which God governs everything—including evil—is written in our minds. In order to reach this state, the soul should withdraw itself from its occupation with particulars and train itself to discover that everything, good or bad, fits in the bigger whole of a divinely established order. In this way man acquires a mind that is 'with God' (*cum Deo*). The wise man is the one who has 'the divine law fixed and unshaken in his soul', so that he is always 'with God'.[15] The lower part of his soul that is occupied with action in the external world is completely governed by his contemplative knowledge of order, so that nothing that happens can upset him. This steadfast knowledge provides him with tranquillity of mind when evil strikes in his life or the lives of others.[16]

[11] *beata u.* 11, CCL 29,71: '*Id ergo, inquam, semper manens nec ex fortuna pendulum nec ullis subiectum casibus esse debet. Nam quidquid mortale et caducum est, non potest a nobis, quando uolumus et quamdiu uolumus, haberi.*'

[12] *beata u.* 8, CCL 29, 70: '*Nihil est enim omne, quod fluit, quod soluitur, quod liquescit et quasi semper perit.*'

[13] *beata u.* 34, CCL 29, 84: '*Quisquis igitur ad summum modum per ueritatem uenerit, beatus est. Hoc est animis Deum habere, id est Deo perfrui. Cetera enim quamuis a Deo habeantur, non habent Deum.*'

[14] *ord.* 1,2.

[15] *ord.* 2,1–7. On the law written in the souls of the wise, see *ord.* 2,25, CSEL 63,164: '*Haec autem disciplina ipsa Dei lex est, quae apud eum fixa et inconcussa semper manens in sapientes animas quasi transcribitur.*'

[16] Augustine does not say that sages are indifferent to evil, or deny the existence of evil. The wise man will exercise love towards his suffering neighbour and teach others to reach the same state as he enjoys (*ord.* 2,5), but will not let his own tranquillity be disturbed by the suffering of others. Augustine also knows of pious men who did not doubt God's providence and goodness,

The Fallen Situation of the Soul

Augustine perceives the soul in its present situation as deeply fallen. Humanity has lost the sight of wisdom, and has become unable to return to it by its own knowledge and strength. Augustine remains as yet uncertain about the causes of man's alienation from wisdom. Is it due to God, nature, necessity, or our own will—to a combination of these factors or to all of them at once?[17] In other words, Augustine hesitates over the interplay between the different causes of human misery, but he is certain about the universality of human fallenness.[18]

The miserable life is a life that is not lived according to reason, the highest faculty of the human soul. Vice originates when the mind hands itself over to sense-experiences, as if these can lead him to truth and beatitude. Instead of seeking the blessed life in the highest good that cannot be lost against one's will, the soul tends to seek beatitude in the things that fade away (*De beata vita*).[19] Instead of seeking its stability in the knowledge of the divine law that governs the whole of the universe, the soul becomes obsessed with its parts, so that it disables itself to discern how everything, good and evil, fits within the greater whole (*De ordine*). Man no longer judges his sense-experiences in the light of transcendental truth, but instead is enslaved by them in his search for truth and happiness.[20] As a consequence, he becomes vulnerable to the loss of temporal goods and loses steadfastness in the face of evil. Augustine calls this lack of wisdom 'poverty' (*egestas*).[21] Wisdom makes the soul rich and fruitful, whereas a lack of wisdom renders the soul poor and in want. A fool might well consider himself happy as long as fortune smiles upon him, but in fact he is miserable, as he has turned his back on the good that cannot be lost against his will.

Augustine uses several images and examples to describe this common foolishness of mankind. Imitating Cicero, he compares men to sailors on a sea. Only very few men manage to arrive at the harbour of wisdom by the

but nevertheless lament in their poems the dark situations in which they find themselves. He might refer here to the authors of the Psalms, which he intensively read during his stay at Cassiciacum (*conf.* 9,8). Augustine does not condemn these lamentations, but sees them as lower stages on the way to spiritual perfection (*ord.* 2,15).

[17] *beata u.* 1, CCL 29,65: '*Cum enim in hunc mundum siue deus siue natura siue necessitas siue uoluntas nostra siue coniuncta horum aliqua siue simul omnia—res enim multum obscura est, sed tamen a te iam inlustranda suscepta—uelut in quoddam procellosum salum nos quasi temere passimque proiecerit, quotusquisque cognosceret, quo sibi nitendum esset quaue redeundum?*' *Acad.* 1, CCL 29,3: '*Sed quoniam ita comparatum est siue pro meritis nostris siue pro necessitate naturae, ut diuinum animum mortalibus inhaerentem nequaquam sapientiae portus accipiat . . .*'

[18] TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 72.

[19] *beata u.* 8. In this passage Augustine calls vice *nequitia*, derived from *nequiquam* (nothing). Vice is the habit of loving that what is nothing in itself. Cf. Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 3,8,18.

[20] *ord.* 2,7. [21] *beata u.* 29.

powers of their own reason and will (*ratione institutus cursus et uoluntas ipsa*).[22] Most people are deceived by erroneous opinions about the happy life. They are caught by seemingly fair winds that seem to bring them to a quiet sea, but which deceive them by the 'fallacious serenity of pleasures and honours' (*fallacissima serenitas uoluptatum honorumque*).[23] They consider themselves happy with their good fortune, but close their eyes to its instability. The rich man Sergius Orata, described by Augustine in *De beata uita* 26, belongs to this category of people. Augustine's patron Romanianus, the addressee of *Contra Academicos*, also used to number among them. In his youth he had become enslaved to his possessions and to the honour he received from the people whom he supported with his money. He had considered himself happy and would never have believed those who told him that he was in fact miserable.[24] This shows that most people are miserable without knowing it. Their minds have become darkened by fallacious ideas about happiness, so that they have become unable to discern where real happiness is to be found.[25] Although these ideas of happiness are challenged by the vicissitudes of life or the precepts of a teacher, the mind is so deeply attached to the memory of sense-experiences that only a few wise people manage to subject their memory to reason.[26]

Augustine interprets the foolishness of the soul as a form of divine retribution. As man's soul is governed by God, his moral action is either rewarded with the increase of virtue, or punished with moral degradation.[27] In *De beata uita*, Augustine expresses this idea when he contends that everyone possesses God, but does so in different ways. Those who seek God possess Him as a loving God (*propitius deus*), but are not yet happy. Those who have found God also possess Him as a loving God, and are already happy. Those, however, who alienate themselves from Him by their vices are neither happy, nor do they possess God as loving, but instead as hostile and adverse (*infestus/adversus deus*).[28] In *De ordine* Augustine refers to the same phenomenon when he describes the wise man as the one who is 'with God'. His soul understands, contemplates, and loves the law of God by which everything in the universe is

[22] *beata u.* 1, CCL 29,65. [23] *beata u.* 1. [24] *Acad.* 1, 1–2.

[25] *Acad.* 3,42; *ord.* 1,29; *ord.* 1,23–4; *sol.* 23–6.

[26] *ord.* 1,7. In this passage, Augustine laments the troubling power of his memory over his mind. He does not yet number himself among the wise, as the wise have subjected their memory to the dominion of reason. For an extended analysis of this passage, see Catherine Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher: Liminality and Disciplina in Augustine's *De ordine*', in *Augustine and the Disciplines*, edited by Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 49–65. Other passages on our slavery to the senses: *Acad.* 3,13; *ord.* 1,30.

[27] *sol.* 1,4, CSEL 89,8: '*Deus, cuius legibus arbitrium animae liberum est bonisque praemia et malis poenae fixis per omnia necessitatibus distributae sunt. Deus, a quo manant usque ad nos omnia bona, a quo coercentur usque a nobis omnia mala.*'

[28] *beata u.* 21.

rightly ordered.[29] Consequently, the fool is the one who is not 'with God' and his law.

These passages indicate that the human choice to seek truth in the realm of space and time is followed by an immediate deprivation of wisdom. This mechanism is described as God's punishment, God's preservation of order over against the sinner.[30] As Augustine puts it in *De ordine*: the soul can act against order, but according to God's righteousness it immediately receives the place that it deserves within the order of the universe.[31] The soul can choose against the finality of its own nature, but cannot break loose from it. Augustine's definition of the life of vice as *non esse cum deo* and *habere deum aduersum* pre-alludes to his later distinction between *esse sub lege* and *esse cum lege*.[32] Both kinds of expressions indicate that one can oppose God and the law he established for man (*lex aeterna*[33]), but cannot break loose from him as the One who preserves that law over against its transgressors.

The Coercive Force of Adverse Winds

In order to be cured from the miserable state of his soul, man needs 'medical care'. This medical care can be found in philosophy—the medicine through which the soul can regain its health and happiness.[34] However, very few people are able to find this remedy by themselves. Most people need the violent admonition of divine providence to be driven in the right direction. In the dialogues, Augustine takes himself and his patron Romanianus as examples of such people.

[29] *ord.* 2,25.

[30] A-I. Bouton-Touboulic, *L'Ordre caché: la notion d'ordre chez Augustin* (Institut des Études Augustiniennes: Paris, 2004), 336.

[31] *ord.* 2,23, CSEL 63,162: '*[Augustinus] Quod enim factum est ut malum nasceretur, non utique Dei ordine factum est, sed cum esset natum Dei ordine inclusum est* . . . ' See for the anti-Stoic background of this passage, note 38.

[32] *uera. rel.* 58; *exp. prop. Rm.* 44.

[33] For Augustine's concept of *lex aeterna* in his early writings, see Rief, *Der Ordobegriff des Jungen Augustinus*, 184–9; Alois Schubert, 'Augustins Lex-Aeterna-Lehre nach Inhalt und Quellen', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen,* Band 24, Heft 2, edited by Clemens Baeumker (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924), 1–63. The concept is originally Stoic. It is connected to a pantheist understanding of providence, in which God and the eternal law coincide. Augustine uses the concept of *lex aeterna* in a theist understanding of God, which identifies the *lex aeterna* with the divine wisdom or reason. God's action towards his creation is governed by this law. Only humans are able to transgress this law and be punished accordingly, because they possess free will. For the difference between the Stoic understanding of *lex aeterna* and Augustine's appropriation of it, see Anton-Hermann Chroust, 'The Fundamental Ideas in St. Augustine's Philosophy of Law', *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 18 (1973), 59.

[34] On this theme see Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*.

In the dialogues Augustine argues that God does not leave the fallen soul to itself. It receives various kinds of admonitions to return. It seems that Augustine distinguishes general admonitions from more personal admonition. In a sense, everything in reality functions as an admonition to search for order, like the sound of trickling water[35] or a cock fight.[36] These things urge us to look beyond physical particulars to the manifest order of the natural world and thus to train our minds to ascend from the material to the spiritual. Augustine shares this idea of order with, for example, Neoplatonism. Augustine, however, bases his view on different presuppositions. For him, the world-order is not immanent to the world as in the Neoplatonist ontology of emanation,[37] or the Stoic identification of god with the universal law, but it is based upon the will of a Creator God.[38] There is a personal God, ontologically distinct from the world,[39] who established the created order and addresses man through it. On the basis of this creational concept of order, Augustine uses the concept of 'secret providence' (*secreta prouidentia*) in his Cassiciacum writings (often under the name of 'fortune').[40] He interprets seemingly random events in life

[35] *ord.* 1,6. [36] *ord.* 1,25.

[37] Madec, 'Thématique augustinienne de la providence', 296; Scholl, *Providentia*, 137.

[38] In *ord.* 1,2 Augustine contends that the order of the animal world is based upon the 'will of the divine majesty' (*arbitrium maiestatis diuinae*). From this observation he concludes that human life can neither be subject to 'the instability of innumerable perturbations' (*innumerabilium perturbationum inconstantia*), but must be governed by the same order. This implies that Augustine also perceives human lives as governed by a divine will, which orders the evil that arises in the universe. Against Neoplatonic understandings of providence, in which evil is inseparably connected to the ontology of the universe, Augustine denies that evil is a necessary part of the divine order. It arises against God's law (*inordinatus*), but God's justice compels it to its deserved place within order (*in sibi meritum ordinem redegit et compulit*). This means that Augustine already in *De ordine* perceives cosmic justice within a theist rather than an emanationist framework. I derive this interpretation from V. Pacioni, 'La Provvidenza Divina e il male nella storia: A proposito di un testo controverso, *De ordine* 1,1, 2.' in *Il mistero del male e la libertà possiblile: lettura dei Dialoghi di Agostino*, edited by Luigi Alici, Remo Piccolomini, and Antonio Pieretti (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1994), 138–48; cf. also Bouton-Touboulic, *L'Ordre*, 253–60; Cipriani, 'La dottrina del peccato originale negli scritti di S. Agostino fino all'*Ad Simplicianum*', in *Il mistero del male e libertà possibile IV: ripensare Agostino*, edited by Luigi Alici, Remo Piccolomini, and Antonio Pieretti (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 25–7. *Contra* William Babcock, 'Sin and Punishment: The Early Augustine on Evil', in *Augustine. Presbyter factus sum*, edited by Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 235–48. Babcock contends that Augustine moves from an aesthetic justification of evil in *de ordine* to an interpersonal understanding of it in *de libero arbitrio* (evil as human sin and God's punishment of sin). As I have argued in this footnote, Augustine already alludes to this idea in *De ordine.*

[39] For arguments in favour of the thesis that Augustine teaches an ontological distinction between God and creation in the Cassiciacum Dialogues, see Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 72–9; J. P. Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity: A Study in Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 35–83. One very convincing passage can be found in *sol.* 1,4 where Augustine addresses God as the one who created us out of nothing.

[40] For a thorough description of this theme in the Dialogues, see J. Doignon, 'L'Émergence de "l'ordre très secret" dans les premiers Dialogues d'Augustin: son incidence sur l'approche de Dieu', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 42 (1996), 243–53.

as means through which God is personally urging people to turn from their improper love for sensible reality and move towards Him. What happens in life is not part of a blind, necessary process, but is sent by a personal God to address man, who has alienated himself from him.[41] In the prefaces to *De beata uita* and *Contra Academicos* Augustine compares this providence to winds that seem adverse,[42] because they take away the quietness of the sea (like certain disasters in life), but eventually bring their victims to the harbour of philosophy where they find 'real and abiding joys'.[43]

However, the blows of fortune do not bring a person automatically to rational insight and behaviour. The *aduersa* can cause people to reconsider their own ideas about the meaning of their lives. They initiate a process of '*Erkenntnisgewinnung*'.[44] But in order to be led in the right direction, people need proper *instruction* that effects a change of mind and will, in order to reach the harbour of philosophy. As an example of this, Augustine notes in the preface of *De beata uita* that people find the harbour of philosophy, because they come across 'certain books' that help them to take the right course. This also happened to Augustine himself, who was helped by the books of the Platonists and Paul to convert both intellectually and morally. The *pectoris dolor* as such did not convert him. It seemed adverse to him as long as he was bound by the desire for glory, for it was depriving him of the instrument with which he strove for glory in this world.[45] Only through his conversion did he come to experience this illness as a blessing in disguise. Only grace made him experience God's 'violence' as something that helped move him forward.[46] We do not know how long Augustine had already suffered from pain in the chest, but it is possible that his reading of the Neoplatonists and Paul helped him to gradually interpret his *pectoris dolor* as a hidden grace.

[41] Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 40; 88–9.

[42] The image of adverse winds that compel one towards the harbour of philosophy is also used by Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations*, 5,2,5. Cf. E. B. J. Postma, *Augustinus' De beata vita* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1946), 147.

[43] Augustine uses the language of coercion in the following passages: *beata u.* 1, CCL 29,66: '*. . . aliquando et inuitos contraque obnitentes aliqua tempestas, quae stultis uidetur aduersa, in optatissimam terram nescientes errantesque conpingeret*'; *beata u.* 2, CCL 29,65: '*. . . aduersa tempestas, in optatissimam uitam quietamque compellit*'; *Acad.* 1,3, CCL 29,4 with regard to Romanianus: '*. . . nunc uero quam te breuiter admonendum tot et tanta quae pertulisti aduersa fecerunt.*'

[44] Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 255.

[45] I interpret Augustine's chest pain (*pectoris dolor*) or gullet pain (*stomachi dolor*) as a psychosomatic illness. It expresses the physical effects of a psychological disease, namely pride. When Augustine becomes angry with Licentius and Trygetius for their competitive behaviour, he feels pain in his *stomachus*. Their behaviour physically reminds him of his own 'strive for glory', and its penal effects. I derive this idea from Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 109. In *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,16, CSEL 91,148 Augustine regards the *pectus* as the symbolic resting-place of pride: '*Nomine enim pectoris significatur superbia, quia ibi dominatur impetus animae.*'

[46] *beata u.* 4. Cf. *conf.* 9,6.

This example shows that external force itself is not enough to bring people to the harbour of philosophy. Further doctrinal guidance is needed. It is not guaranteed, however, that one will receive the correct guidance. On the contrary, many people respond to the loss of temporal goods by seeking comfort in idol worship, or by taking recourse to prognosticators. Augustine criticizes these practices in *ord.* 2, 27. He observes that many people are impressed by the power that demons are allowed to exercise over nature; therefore they try to win their favour. But this does not free them from their entanglement in the material world. Others seek their strength in erroneous philosophies or heresies that fail to provide a cure for the soul. Thus Augustine himself had acted. After his reading of Cicero, he knew that he had to return to a destiny from which he had alienated himself ('the immortality of wisdom'). Nevertheless, although he set course to the fatherland, Manichaeism and Scepticism kept him from reaching the harbour that gives access to it. Although Augustine gives both of these movements a place in God's providential plan for his life,[47] in and of themselves these held him back from being redeemed from the power of concupiscence and worldly ambition.

Augustine expresses the same fear of erroneous direction to Romanianus in the preface to book 2 of *Contra Academicos.* Fortune had awakened Romanianus from his worldly sloth. But this same fortune also allowed the 'tides and tempests' of 'despair of knowing the truth' or 'the premature certainty of knowing the truth' to tempt him.[48] It seems that Augustine has Scepticism and Manichaeism in mind here. They do not have the power to redeem man from his boundedness to the senses. Scepticism is unable to do this, as it despairs of gaining any stable knowledge of the truth at all.[49] Manichaeism cannot do it, because it is a materialist heresy, according to which God is dispersed in the realm of space and time. Augustine therefore warns Romanianus that, having been awakened to the search for truth, he should not succumb to the temptations of false wisdom.

These remaining threats of misdirection illustrate that the experience of mishap and the subsequent search for wisdom are not sufficient for true conversion.[50] The signs of nature need to be interpreted by teachers who

[47] *beata u.* 4. [48] *Acad.* 2,1–2.

[49] Ryan N. S. Topping argues that although Scepticism seems to be a sophisticated ethical position, as it puts all truth claims in doubt, in practice the sceptic will end up following his impulses or the majority opinion, because everyday life forces him to act and to choose a moral standard that guides his actions. Scepticism is therefore unable to liberate man from the senses. See Ryan Topping, *Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's Early Theology of Education* (Washington, DC Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 115–25.

One should bear in mind, however, that Augustine refers to scepticism here as it was commonly understood, namely as a form of relativism. He himself came to understand it as a hidden form of Platonism, which only used the means of scepticism to battle materialist philosophies such as Stoicism and Epicureanism. See *Acad.* 3,33–41.

[50] Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, 48.

show the right way to respond to these signs.[51] As people take many wrong tracks in response to the voice of God in nature, not very many arrive at the harbour of philosophy.[52] We all experience the admonitions of providence, but we do not all receive the subsequent teaching that is needed to respond to these signs in the right way. In *De ordine* 1,28 Augustine uses 'predestinarian' language to express this idea, saying that all people live in darkness, but that wisdom (*sapientia*, which is the Son of God himself) only calls some upwards and permits others to fall in the deeps.[53] Many are called, few are chosen.

Augustine sees himself as someone who has received the providential grace to have arrived at the harbour of philosophy. In gratitude he now plays the role of 'navigator' for his readers. This in itself is not something uniquely Christian. As I will show below, philosophers like Seneca and Cicero also regarded themselves as interpreters of fortune's admonitions. What I would like to argue, however, is that Augustine, unlike his pagan colleagues, tries to convince his readers that the buffetings of fortune in fact come from the God of Christianity who admonishes mankind to surrender to him in his grace. This will prove to be the main difference between Augustine's harbour of philosophy and that of the philosophers. Whereas the philosophers direct man to his own inner strength to regain internal tranquillity, Augustine directs his readers to the clemency of the Creator, revealed in Power and Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24) who assumed a mortal body, in order to lead his followers upwards.[54]

Cicero and Seneca on the Relationship between Suffering and Philosophy

Fortune's admonition to philosophy also features as a theme in the writings of pagan philosophers.[55] In this section I will illustrate this on the basis of Cicero and Seneca, in order to clarify how Augustine Christianizes the traditions they represent.

One of the philosophers who influenced Augustine profoundly was Marcus Tullius Cicero. In his largely Stoic thought-world, human rational self-discipline (*uirtus*) was believed to be the power by which man remains

[51] Jean Doignon, 'La "Praxis" de l'*admonitio* dans les Dialogues de Cassiciacum de Saint Augustin', *Vetera Christianorum* 23 (1986), 21–37 (22–4).

[52] *beata u.* 1.

[53] *ord.* 1,29, CSEL 63,141: '*Demersos quidem esse animos omnium stultorum indoctorumque commune est, sed non uno atque eodem modo demersis opem sapientia et manum porrigit. Alii sunt, credite, alii sunt, qui sursum uocantur, alii, qui in profunda laxantur.*' Cf. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 241, 279–80.

[54] *Acad.* 3,16; 3,43. Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 92–3.

[55] Doignon, 'La "Praxis" de l'*admonitio*', 21.

standing in this world and overcomes the challenges that cross his path. *Virtus* provides the way to human freedom. In the fifth book of the *Tusculan Disputations*, however, Cicero questions this conviction. Due to recent mishap in his life (the death of his daughter Tullia and Caesar's victory over him), his spirit was so downcast, that he started to fear that his mind was inseparably bound to the vulnerability of the body. This would mean that the mind, like the body, cannot be redeemed from the realm where fortune reigns. Cicero corrects himself, however, by remembering that his doubts about human nature were based upon common opinion, rather than on the truth. Although nature has furnished us only with some feeble rays of light and seeds of virtue, these are nevertheless enough to conduct us to the happy life, if we let them mature in us. However, from our birth onward we tend to extinguish them by evil habits and wrong opinions about ourselves.[56] Thus, our self-perception is misdirected. Instead of believing in our own ability to free ourselves from slavery to fortune, we make ourselves believe that we are its pitiable victims and need the help of the gods to secure our lives from mishap.[57] Instead, Cicero argues, we should take responsibility for ourselves by seeking a cure for our souls in philosophy.

For Cicero, philosophy, the medicine of the soul, paves the way for man's emancipation from fortune's power. Philosophy teaches us to scorn everything that affects us from outside ourselves and to find happiness in virtue alone. As such, 'philosophy [is] a kind of self-therapy to strengthen one's mind after *Fortuna's* assaults have seriously undermined and cast doubt on one of the fundamental principles of traditional ideology: that one's *virtus* ought to be strong enough to render the happy life.'[58] Cicero says that he already dedicated himself to philosophy in his youth, but the recent blows of *Fortuna* drove him again into philosophy's arms. To describe his situation, Cicero uses the imagery of the sea on which a heavy tempest caught him and forced him to take refuge in the harbour of philosophy. There he seeks shelter in order to heal the wounds caused by fortune and to strengthen himself against her to resist her in the future (when he is able to return to the political life again).[59] Cicero considers fortune as an adverse force, which, by lucky change,

[56] Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 3,1 (Loeb, 225).
[57] Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 5,2 (Loeb, 427–8).
[58] Van Reyn, *Fortuna Caeca*, vol. 2, 196.
[59] Gerda Busch wrote about Cicero's *fortunae resistere* through the weapons of *sapientia*: 'Sobald nämlich Cicero ganz durchdrungen ist von der tröstlichen Einsicht dass Tullia nur wie alles Vergängliche vergangen ist und der frühe Tod ihr viele Leiden erspart hat, muss der Vater Herr werden über die Trauer … Als Mensch muss der betroffene bedenken, dass weder leichtes noch Schweres absoluten Wert hat, als Mann muss er tapfer aushalten, was ihm auferlegt wird. Einsicht und Kraft müssen sich verbinden, wenn der Mensch widrigem Schicksal standhalten will. Weshalb bedeutet *fortunae resistere*: sich mit den Waffen vernünftiger Einsicht gegen Angriffe des Schicksals verteidigen.' See Gerda Busch, 'Fortunae resistere in der Moral des Seneca', *Antike und Abendland* 10 (1961), 131–54 (137).

simultaneously makes him aware of his moral weaknesses, and his need for the medicine of philosophical leisure. Through the cure of philosophy he will show the power of human nature to emancipate himself from the power of fortune, and reach the happy life by self-generated virtue.

The second example is Seneca. In his little tractate *De prouidentia* Seneca focuses on the question of why the gods often strike good men with mishap and seem to spare those who lead immoral lives. According to him, the gods do this in order to give good men the opportunity to exercise themselves in virtue. The strikes of fortune help them to get to know their steadfastness of character. Just as a soldier only becomes a better fighter through confrontation with adversaries, and a seaman proves his helmsmanship in storms, man only comes to know his weakness and strength through adversity.[60] If virtue is never challenged, it withers away. Therefore, we should not be afraid of the adversities the gods send us, but regard them as incentives for our mind to exercise our strength of character. The gods are like fathers who give their children a hard education in order to make them strong and independent. Those who seem to prosper, because fortune smiles upon them, are in fact more miserable than those who receive the opportunity to gain inner strength through the experience of mishap. Our confrontation with fortune should be regarded as a hard conquest that will eventually enable us to despise her:

> No proof of virtue is ever mild. If we are lashed and torn by fortune, let us bear it; it is not cruelty but a struggle, and the oftener we engage in it, the stronger we shall be. The staunchest member of the body is the one that is kept in constant use. We should offer ourselves to Fortune in order that, struggling with her, we may be hardened by her. Gradually she will make us a match for herself. Familiarity with exposure to danger will give contempt for danger.[61]

In the end the wise man will be able to say: 'I am under no compulsion, I suffer nothing against my will, and I am not God's slave but his follower, and the more so, indeed, because I know that everything proceeds according to the law that is fixed and enacted for all time.'[62] For Seneca, God—who is identical to the necessary order of the universe—trains the mind through mishap to make it a worthy partner of himself. As such he proves to be the father of virtuous men.

Cicero and Seneca both conceive of *fortuna* as a force that enables us to become aware of our self-alienation and to improve our virtue by the exercise of reason. The goal of the battle with fortune is to conquer her in the end, so that we will possess our happiness totally within ourselves and can be free from anything external to us.[63] Mishap functions as a counterforce that

[60] Seneca, *De prouidentia*, 4,5 (Loeb, 26–7).
[61] Seneca, *De prouidentia*, 4,12 (Loeb, 30–1).
[62] Seneca, *De prouidentia*, 5,6 (Loeb, 36–7).
[63] Busch, 'Fortunae resistere in der Moral des Seneca', 140–4.

compels us again and again to restrain our desires for things that are not within our power. We can control these desires through rational self-control.

Divine Providence Coerces towards Humility

In the previous section we observed how two pagan philosophers interpreted fortune's blows as an admonition to strengthen the soul by rational self-control, in order to prove the self-sufficiency of human nature. Augustine Christianizes this pedagogical interpretation of fortune's violence. I will illustrate this from the prefaces to books 1 and 2 of *Contra Academicos*, where Augustine teaches his patron Romanianus how to interpret and respond to the blows of fortune.

Augustine depicts Romanianus' situation as quite miserable. He has lost a court case and risks heavy financial losses and a corresponding decrease in social standing. In other words, he has been severely hit by fortune. Moreover, Augustine fears that Romanianus' adherence to Manichaeism disables him from interpreting his experiences in a positive way, as Manichaeism lacks a doctrine of providence. What happens in the world, according to Manichaeism, is the outcome of two opposing forces and therefore is random and accidental.[64] It has no meaning. This is why Augustine wants Romanianus to know who stands behind fortune. As observed before, Augustine understands *fortuna* not as an independent goddess, nor as an expression of a necessary and blind world order (as in Stoicism and Neoplatonic thought). It is the providence of a personal God, who is interested in the lives of individual people. Augustine, for example, supposes that the rich Romanianus himself is an instrument of God to grant Augustine the financial support to dedicate himself to philosophy.[65] This same God, Augustine believes, is at work in the troubles that Romanianus is now experiencing.

Another way in which Augustine's understanding of providence proves specifically Christian is the way in which he relates *fortuna* to *uirtus.* In classical Roman ideology, as we have seen in the case of Cicero and Seneca, *fortuna* is a force that we need to fight against by self-generated virtue. We ourselves have to exercise our minds through the cure of philosophy in order to restrain our desires for things external to us. Although it is not denied that fortune can offer some help in this regard,[66] the emphasis is on self-generated virtue as the way to the happy life.[67] There is no personal God who cares about the weakness of his creatures. Augustine, however, not only conceives of

[64] Jason David BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma 1: Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 265.
[65] *Acad.* 2,4. [66] Seneca, *De beata uita*, 16,3.
[67] Van Reyn, *Fortuna Caeca*, vol. 2, 181.

fortune as the force that has power over things external to us and that should be resisted and overcome by virtue; it also helps us to attain virtue itself. It is the personal God of Christianity who has revealed himself as humanity's saviour and upon whom humans can call.

In the preface to book 1 of *Contra Academicos*, Augustine argues along traditional lines that those who belong to virtue cannot be snatched away from virtue by fortune. But the question is: how do we attain virtue? Augustine's non-traditional answer is that fortune herself brings us there. 'The fact is that . . . the divine spirit that is united to our mortal bodies can never reach the harbour of wisdom, where the wind of fortune, favourable or unfavourable, cannot reach it, unless fortune herself . . . brings it there.'[68] In his analysis of Romanianus' situation, Augustine emphasizes that in his seeming misfortunes God himself is at work to draw Romanianus back into order. As a Roman aristocrat, Romanianus might experience fortune as a malevolent force, aimed at his destruction. Fortune robs him of his public standing and honour for which he has worked so hard.[69] From the perspective of a Roman aristocrat this could be a reason to despise oneself, but Augustine admonishes Romanianus to resist that inclination (*ne contemnas te*). He should acknowledge that his soul is made for a destiny higher than the enjoyment of temporal goods and honours. By depriving him of temporal goods, God makes him experience 'how fleeting, unreliable and full of misery is all that which mortals think to be good'.[70] He would never have acknowledged this if he had continued to prosper. Through these difficulties 'that divine element (his mind[71]) . . . which has somehow been lulled to sleep . . . by the drowsy lethargy of this life, providence, working in secret, has decided to rouse by means of the several harsh buffetings you have suffered.'[72] Using his own *pectoris dolor* as an example, Augustine tries to convince Romanianus that God uses his sufferings to reveal to him

[68] *Acad.* 1,1, CCL 29,3: '*Diuinum animum mortalibus inhaerentem nequaquam sapientiae portus accipiat, ubi neque aduersante fortunae flatu neque secundante moueatur, nisi eo illum ipsa uel secunda uel quasi aduersa perducat*.' For this observation I draw on Van Reyn, *Fortuna Caeca*, vol. 2, 175–6. Of course, this expression is only revolutionary if one interprets it against the background of Augustine's Christian view of God.

[69] Augustine depicts Romanianus as a noble aristocrat who supported the people around him with his money and received due honour in return. This was the public *dignitas* of a Roman aristocrat, which he merited by his services to the community (*Acad.* 1,2).

[70] *Acad.* 1,2.

[71] When Augustine calls the mind *diuinus*, this does not necessarily mean that he conceives of the soul as divine in the Plotinian or Stoic sense of the word (as somehow ontologically one with the divine). If it is true, as I assume, that Augustine already in the Cassiciacum Dialogues regarded the soul as a creature (cf. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 72–9; Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 82), *diuinus* means something like 'apt to know God'.

[72] *Acad.* 1,3, CCL 29,4: '*Illud ipsum, inquam, quod in te diuinum nescio quo uitae huius somno ueternoque sopitum est, uariis illis durisque iactationibus secreta prouidentia excitare decreuit*' (translation: John J. O'Meara, *Against the Academics* (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1950), 38).

the deceitfulness of the 'flattering gifts of this world' (*dona blandita huius mundi*),[73] to make him stop singing their praises, and to compel him to seek the cure of philosophy, through which the soul is brought back to its proper place in the order of the universe. Philosophy is a means to heal the soul from its irrational orientation, that is, from the ambition to establish its beatitude within the realm of space and time. Christian philosophy provides the way out of this, as it releases the soul from its attachment to the world of the senses and teaches it to worship its transcendent Creator.[74]

But how will Romanianus reach the harbour of philosophy? On the one hand Augustine points to the nobility of Romanianus' soul, but on the other hand to its weakness. Just like many other people, he can easily be distracted from his desire for philosophy because of a weakness of the will (*a quaerendi uoluntate avertentur*).[75] Therefore, he cannot reach his goal without the help of divine providence. Accordingly, Augustine prays for Romanianus and admonishes him to join him in prayer. Augustine advices him to employ the oars of all available virtues in rowing against all the things that can distract him from his course towards true philosophy, but first of all (*in primis*) he has to implore with full devotion and piety the divine help (*diuinum auxilium*) so that he may hold course towards the harbour of philosophy.[76] He needs divine help in order not to be distracted from his goal. The human will is too weak in itself to reach the harbour of philosophy on its own power, and therefore needs to calls upon God for help and guidance.

But how can Romanianus be sure of God's benevolence? The fortune that is said to be aimed at Romanianus' wellbeing also allows him to be confronted with the weapons of the New Academy. Does this providence have a specific

[73] *Acad.* 1,3, CCL 29,4: '*Euigila, euigila, oro te; multum, mihi crede, gratulaberis, quod paene nullis prosperitatibus, quibus tenentur incauti, mundi huius tibi dona blandita sunt, quae me ipsum capere moliebantur cotidie ista cantantem, nisi me pectoris dolor uentosam professionem abicere et in philosophiae gremium confugere coegisset.*'

[74] At various places Augustine suggests that philosophy at Cassiciacum is an anti-corporeal understaking. It seems to imply an abandonment of the sensible world and the body (e.g. *Acad.* 2,2; 2,22). In *retr.* 1,1,3 he denies that he intended to teach that the soul should turn back to God from a fallen state in the body. Nonetheless, he regrets to have suggested that the kingdom of God is the intelligible world (transcending the body) rather than the world to come in which the body and soul will be united in perfect harmony. Augustine's appreciation of the body as participating in the vision of God evolved over the years. Cf. Frederick van Fleteren, 'Augustine and *Corpus Spirituale*', *Augustinian Studies* 38/2 (2007), 333–53.
For a good summary of the study of the *disciplinae* as exercise in the ascent of the soul from creation to the Creator, see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24–6.

[75] *Acad.* 2,1.

[76] *Acad.* 2,1, CCL 29,18: '*Quam ob rem contra illos fluctus procellasque fortunae cum obnitendum remis qualiumcumque uirtutum tuum in primis diuinum auxilium omni deuotione atque pietate implorandum est, ut intentio constantissima bonorum studiorum teneat cursum suum, a quo eam nullus casus excutiat, quominus illam philosophiae tutissimus iucundissimusque portus accipiat. Haec prima tua causa est.*'

intention towards us? And if so, how can we know this intention? Here, Augustine's admonition to prayer proves to be specifically Christian. Prayer as such is not a specifically Christian phenomenon. It is found both in ancient religions and philosophy. In ancient religions, however, prayer is a way of influencing the gods in order to persuade them to grant certain benefits; philosophical prayer, as it is for example regarded by Plato and Plotinus, is a form of magic, a way to make use of the spiritual sympathy of the universe for the purification of the soul.[77]

Augustine's idea of prayer here is specifically Christian, as he considers it as a response to the salvific will of God himself, revealed in Jesus Christ. Augustine identifies the addressee of his prayer as the 'Power and Wisdom of the highest God (*summi Dei uirtutem atque sapientiam*, cf. 1 Cor. 1:24), who is no other than the Son of God whom the mysteries present to us.'[78] The kind of prayer that Augustine has in mind is not a means to appease the gods or to mould one's own soul, but the response to God's salvific self-revelation in Christ. God the Son is the *uirtus et sapientia Dei*—the powers that we need to become wise—who has assumed a human body and thus revealed God's salvific will for fallen mankind. He is revealed to us in the mysteries, that is, (the doctrine of) the Scriptures.[79] Fortune's admonition to Romanianus to seek the cure of wisdom in philosophy thus becomes the admonition to seek help from Christ, who is the *uirtus* that we need in order for our soul to be freed from *fortuna*.[80] Through his providence God admonishes us not to seek strength in ourselves (as the philosophers teach), but to seek strength from

[77] Therese Fuhrer, *Augustin Contra Academicos (vel de Academicis Bücher 2 und 3). Einleitung und Kommentar* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 63. Cicero, for example, says that calling upon the gods is inferior to trusting the power of one's own nature to attain virtue (*Tusc.* 5, 2). For Plato, right prayer is a means to show respect to the gods for their righteous governance of the universe. In doing so the soul improves itself. We should, however, not expect from the gods that they grant our requests (cf. *Leg.* 10, 909b). Plotinus sees prayer, according to Stoic principles, as a kind of magic. There are powers in the universe that can be affected by prayer–, but the sage does not make use of these kinds of prayers. Plotinus speaks about prayers of the sage to the One, but means by that a meditative passivity that is observed after one's purification of multiplicity and before the revelation of the One to the soul (which cannot be forced through human action). The One, however, does not intentionally respond to our prayers. For Plato and Plotinus, see John Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 201 (on Plato); 202–12 (on Plotinus). On the importance of prayer in the Cassiciacum Dialogues, see further P. J. Couvé, *Vita beata en Vita aeterna: een onderzoek naar de ontwikkeling van het begrip 'Vita beata' naast en tegenover 'Vita aeterna', bij Lactantius. Ambrosius en Augustinus, onder invloed der Romeinsche Stoa* (Baarn: Hollandia, 1947), 209.

[78] *Acad.* 2,1, CCL 29,18: '*Oro autem ipsam summi Dei uirtutem atque sapientiam. Quid est enim aliud, quem mysteria nobis tradunt Dei filium.*'

[79] Fuhrer, *Augustin contra Academicos*, 76: 'Die Bezeichnung *mysteria* ist bei den Kirchenschriftstellern eine geläufige Metapher für die heilige Schrift bzw. die darin vermittelte Lehre.' See also Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church*, 376.

[80] It is not clear how Augustine exactly conceives of this help from Christ. He seems to think of a strengthening of the will, but also of prosperous circumstances ('good winds') through which Romanianus can join Augustine in his life of leisure.

him, by humbly subjecting ourselves to Christ, who is presented to us through the teaching of the Church.

In his teaching to Romanianus, Augustine not only distinguishes himself from pagan philosophers, but also makes an important point against the Manichees. Against the Manichees who separate the 'god of evil' from the Father of Christ, Augustine confirms their identity. The God of providence is the same God as the one who is presented to us in the mysteries of the Church. The 'violent' God of providence is the same God as the Father of Christ, who has come down to heal our souls from their entanglement in the sensible world.

Divine Authority: Power and Teaching

In the preceding section I argued that, according to Augustine, the force of divine providence urges Romanianus first of all to put his hope in the care of the God of Christianity. This brings us to Augustine's reflections on the function of divine authority for the cure for the soul. In his discussion of the nature of divine authority in the Dialogues, Augustine already alludes to a theme that he will develop after his baptism: the descent of God in history in order to heal the human mind from its obsession with the senses.

In the Cassiciacum Dialogues Augustine already emphasizes that the Christian religion teaches the historical authority of Christ, in contrast to the pride of the Neoplatonist philosophers, who presume that they can attain the fatherland by their own rational powers. According to Augustine, souls have attached themselves so deeply to their senses that they cannot return to the world of the intellect, the intelligible world, by themselves. The *proprium* of the Christian religion is that the divine intellect has come down to help humans to ascend to God. In the following quotation Augustine describes the meaning of the incarnation:

> the most subtle reasoning would never recall souls blinded by the manifold darkness of error and stained deeply by the slime of the body, had not the most high God, because of a particular compassion for all people (*quadam clementia populari*), bent and submitted the authority of the divine intellect even to the human body itself. By the precepts (*praecepta*) as well as the deeds (*facta*) of that intellect souls have awakened, and are able, without the strife of disputation, to return to themselves and see once again their fatherland.[81]

[81] *Acad.* 3,42, CCL 29,60: '. . . *cui animas multiformibus erroris tenebris caecatas et altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitas numquam ista ratio subtilissima reuocaret, nisi summus Deus populari quadam clementia diuini intellectus auctoritatem usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret atque summitteret, cuius non solum praeceptis sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semet ipsas et resipiscere patriam etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent*' (translation: O'Meara, slightly adapted).

What is of most interest for my present argument is that Augustine refers to Christ's deeds and precepts. These form his method of instruction. In *De ordine* 2,27[82] Augustine situates these *facta* and *praecepta* in a broader scheme of what he calls 'divine authority'. First, the divine authority manifests itself in 'sensible signs' (*sensibilia signa*). Christ's miraculous deeds force those who are still bound to the senses to acknowledge him as the one who has all power over temporal creation.[83] Demons, however, are also allowed to exercise power over nature. By this power they seduce people to subjection to themselves. This is what takes place in pagan religion: people subject themselves to demons in order to benefit from their temporal power.[84] The second characteristic of divine authority, therefore, by which it distinguishes itself from demonic authority, is that it leads man from the sensible to the intelligible world. It 'leads man onwards, shows him to what extent it has debased itself for his sake and bids him not to be confined to the senses, to which indeed those things [miracles] seem wondrous, but to soar upwards to the intellect.'[85]

Christ's method of instruction is thus twofold: he attracts attention by his miracles, and leads those who listen further through his words. Thus Augustine summarizes the life and work of Christ as narrated in the Gospels.[86] Through miracles Christ showed the people that he was in charge of temporal life. In doing so, Christ sought his people on their own spiritual level, bounded as they were to the senses, and made them attentive to himself.[87] These miracles, however, served a higher purpose. Christ intended to lead his people from the

[82] The part of *ord.* 2,27, CSEL 63,166 that is discussed here reads as follows: '*Illa ergo auctoritas diuina dicenda est, quae non solum in sensibilibus signis transcendit omnem humanam facultatem sed et ipsum hominem agens ostendit ei, quousque se propter ipsum depresserit, et non teneri sensibus, quibus uidentur illa miranda, sed ad intellectum iubet euolare simul demonstrans, et quanta hic possit et cur haec faciat et quam parui pendat. Doceat enim oportet et factis potestatem suam et humilitate clementiam et praeceptione naturam, quae omnia sacris, quibus initiamur, secretius firmiusque traduntur, in quibus bonorum uita facillime non disputationum ambagibus sed mysteriorum auctoritate purgatur.*'

[83] The power of God to work miracles is the same as the power of fortune of which Augustine so often speaks in his dialogues. It is the power that the Creator exercises over his creation. Cf. *Acad.* 3,4, CCL 29,36: '*Ipsa uita nostra, cum hic uiuimus, sit in potestate fortunae.*'

[84] Frederick van Fleteren, 'Demons', in *Augustine Through the Ages*, 266–8.

[85] *ord.* 2,27 (translation: Russell, *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 124).

[86] Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 307. The Gospels associate the power of Christ to heal the sick with his authority over demons. Augustine himself refers a few times to demons who manifest their power over nature (future telling: *Acad.* 1,20; manifestation of powers: *ord.* 2,27), thus seducing man to worship them in exchange for temporal benefits. Christ saves the human soul from the dominion of demons, first by showing his superiority over them with regard to his power and second by teaching humans to prefer God to temporal creation, by laying off this power on the cross.

[87] This is a recurring theme in Augustine, which he also applies to the Incarnation of Christ: man was misled by external persuasion and is led back to God through external persuasion. Cf. Patout Burns, 'Providence as Grace in Augustine', in *Augustinus After: Saint Augustin: africanité et universalité. Actes du colloque international Alger-Annaba, 1–7 avril 2001*, vol. 1, edited by Pierre Yves Fux et al. (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 2003), 211–18 (213).

sensible to the intelligible world. For that reason He laid off his divine power and taught the people, by word and deed, to spurn temporal things and to seek intelligible things. In other words, Christ as God teaches his people that he is in charge of the temporal world to which their souls are so deeply attached. Christ as man, in his humility, teaches them to despise this temporal world, and to ascend from the temporal to the intelligible world.

In the Dialogues, Augustine does not explicate what this teaching of Christ exactly consists of. He will do this in his Thagastan writings, when he develops the theme of God's temporal dispensation further. In the Dialogues, however, Augustine is already clear on one point: in the history of salvation God accommodates himself to his people in two ways. First, by showing his sovereign power over the temporal world. Secondly, by teaching them through the example of Christ that they should value the intelligible world—which is the kingdom of Christ[88]—more than the world that can be seen with the eyes.[89] These two elements of God's method of instruction return in Augustine's discussion of the difference between the Old and the New Testament (*coercitio/timor—instructio/caritas*).

Augustine moreover considers this divine authority to be at work through the teaching of the Church. 'Therein the life of good men is most easily purified, not indeed by the circumlocution of disputation, but by the authority of the mysteries.'[90] In *De ordine* 2,15 Augustine makes it even clearer when he says that 'he [God] who allows no one to perish who rightly believes in Him through the mysteries, may by this bond [of faith] draw them to Himself and free them from these dreadful, entangling evils.'[91] Again, Augustine is not yet clear about how the two aspects of the divine authority are mediated through the teaching of the Church. This is a theme that he will develop later in his Thagastan writings.

THE DISCIPLINARY POWER OF DIALOGUE

Augustine's Disputations with his Pupils: Purpose and Rules

During his stay at Cassiciacum Augustine organizes philosophical disputations with his pupils and family members. Although Augustine is convinced

[88] *ord.* 1,32.

[89] Karl Heinrich Lütcke, *Auctoritas bei Augustin* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968), 119–23. 160–1; idem, 'Auctoritas', *A-L* 498–510 (506).

[90] *ord.* 2,27, CSEL 63,166: '*In quibus bonorum uita facillime non disputationum ambagibus sed mysteriorum auctoritate purgatur*' (translation: Russell, *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 124).

[91] *ord.* 2,15, CSEL 63,157: '*Quo illos uinculo [fidei] ad sese trahat atque ab his horrendis et inuolutissimis malis liberet ille, qui neminem sibi per mysteria bene credentem perire permittit*.'

that the way of salvation starts with the authority of Christ, he believes that philosophical disputation can serve to reach a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the Christian faith.[92] These disputations exercise the minds of its participants in acquiring a deeper understanding of the truth that is accepted by faith.

The philosophical dialogues that Augustine organizes at his 'Cassiciacum-school' have a disciplinary character. The dynamics of disputation confronts the participants with the state of their own souls. Not only does it reveal their lack of knowledge, but also the lower passions that lurk beneath the surface of their outward presentation, such as the desire for praise and the fear of being defeated by the arguments of others. In other words, it shows man to himself as not yet 'with God', and standing in need of intellectual and moral progress. As such these dialogues have a similar function to the coercive power of fortune. They reveal the disputants' slavery to lower passions, and thus intend to effect a new openness for truth and learning.[93]

At several places Augustine explains the purpose and rules of these disputations. He frequently compares the disputations to a contest (*certamen*[94]), or a legal case (*causa*[95]) between the dialogue partners.[96] In the disputation, Augustine's interlocutors try to conquer one another by the force of logical argumentation. The goal of the contest, however, is not personal victory over one another, but instead the common discovery of truth. This, Augustine argues, is the difference between the rhetorical school he has left (*schola illa*) and the school of Cassiciacum (*schola nostra*).[97] In the school of Cassiciacum, disputation does not stand in the service of gaining honour for one's argumentative or rhetorical skills, nor is it a mere game, but it serves the purification of the mind in its search for the truth. Through disputation the truth itself should conquer the disputants and bind them together. Therefore, they should be willing to be overcome by the arguments of the others. Licentius even says that if he is defeated by the other disputants, he considers this as part of the divine order,[98] which is aimed at his wellbeing.[99]

[92] This contention is mainly based upon *ord.* 2,16 and *Acad.* 3,42–3. Cf. Topping, *Happiness and Wisdom*, 167–27; J. J. O'Meara, *The Early Augustine: The Growth of Augustine's Mind up to his Conversion* (London: Longmans, 1954), 196–7; Frederik van Fleteren, 'Authority and Reason, Faith and Understanding in the Thought of St. Augustine', *Augustinian Studies* 4 (1973), 33–71; Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 37, 69–70. Although many scholars defend the view that Augustine regards philosophy as subservient to Christianity, there are also voices that continue to defend the 'two-ways hypothesis', e.g. Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[93] Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 255 footnote 7. [94] *Acad.* 1,16. [95] *Acad.* 2,22.

[96] For the comparison between dialogue and battle, see Plato's *Gorgias*, 447a; 505d.

[97] On this distinction, see Laura Holt, 'Wisdom's Teacher: Augustine at Cassiciacum', *Augustinian Studies* 29/2 (1998), 47–60.

[98] *ord.* 1,9. [99] *ord.* 1,23.

In dialogue, the disputants continually compel one another to think. In this way they acquire knowledge of their rational abilities. The *egestas* of the soul, the extent to which it lacks wisdom, is revealed. As Augustine puts it: one comes to know 'how much strength' one has still to acquire in order to know and defend the truth.[100] Therefore, if one of the interlocutors is defeated or becomes aware of having used wrong arguments, his partner should not close the discussion by claiming personal victory. He should give his colleague a second chance.[101] In his turn, the other discussion partner should not be ashamed of his mistake, but is obliged to take this second chance in order to continue the discussion. After all, his own lack of arguments does not necessarily imply that his partner has provided good arguments or true propositions. Thus the dialogue partners mutually help each other to find the truth, precisely by 'forcing' each other to make mistakes.

The Practice of Dialectics

Let us now turn to the dialogues themselves. I will focus on the dialogues between Augustine as moderator and his pupils Licentius and Trygetius, recorded in *Contra Academicos* and *De ordine*. In the preface to book 1 of *Contra Academicos*, Augustine presents Licentius and Trygetius as both converted from the lower pleasures of youth to the pursuit of philosophy.[102] Their disputations, however, will prove that below this initial 'desire for finding the true and right' (*cupiditas inueniendi ueri et recti*),[103] lower passions are still present. We will see Augustine using the fear of punishment as a pedagogical instrument to restrain his pupils from yielding to these inclinations.

De ordine starts with a nightly discussion between Augustine, Licentius, and Trygetius about order, occasioned by the sound of dripping water. Augustine is surprised at Licentius' ability to engage in philosophical disputation, because he was not well versed in the discipline, and loved poetry more. After a period in which Licentius seems to have been silent, Augustine wants to continue the discussion with him, but Licentius appears to have returned to his poetry. Augustine then bursts out against Licentius, reproving him for his blindness: 'With your poetry you are building a wall between yourself and the truth!'

[100] *ord.* 1,20, CSEL 63,134. In this passage, Augustine says to Licentius that he will challenge the latter's thesis ('nothing happens outside of order') by defending a counterposition ('there are things that happen outside of order'—which Augustine of course regards as an *error*). He hopes that he will be defeated by Licentius, as this would would prove how much Licentius has already progressed in philosophy. If Licentius were defeated by Augustine, however, Licentius would experience how much strength he still had to acquire to return to God (*res te ipsa commonebit quantae tibi uires, ut in eum firmior redeas parandae sint*).

[101] *Acad.* 1,8. [102] *Acad.* 1,4. [103] *Acad.* 1,8.

This outburst results in Licentius' temporary conversion. He regards Augustine's reprimand as a divine sign. Just as Licentius himself, some moments earlier, had by his clamour caused a mouse to turn back to his hole, so Augustine's clamour converted Licentius to turn back from poetry to the true and unshaken dwelling-place of philosophy (*philosophari… uera et inconcussa nostra habitatio*).[104] Augustine's deterrence thus seems to effect a conversion, but in fact it only effects a temporary suppression of Licentius' love for poetry. When we meet him the following day, his wisdom has gone and again he turns out to be afraid to engage in dialogue, when Augustine challenges him. His preference for poetry and fear of losing face have displaced his love for truth.

During the previous night, Augustine had promised Licentius to challenge his pupil's thesis that everything happens within order. Now Augustine sets out to fulfil his promise. In order to engage with his pupils in dialogue, he first admonishes them to concentrate (*hic esto*—'be here with your mind') and to be aware of the importance of the subject for their lives. When Augustine observes from their body language that they are eager to listen to what he is going to say, he changes his pedagogical strategy. Instead of delivering a monologue on *ordo*, he challenges Licentius to give a definition of it. Licentius is shocked about this sudden change of pedagogical strategy.

> When he heard that he was compelled to give a definition, he was shocked as if cold water was sprinkled over him, and he looked at me with a very confused face and said to me, as people do in these kind of situations, with a nervous smile: What is this? What do you think I am? Do you think that I am inspired by a spirit from outside myself? But immediately he animated himself and said: maybe there is some power at my side.[105]

Augustine's admonition to give a definition (which requires cogitation, instead of a passive attitude of listening) confronts Licentius again with his limited abilities and, as his nervous reaction suggests, with his fear of losing face. His first reaction is to avoid discussion. It is easier to listen to the master, than to battle with him.[106] In *Acad.* 1,17 Licentius betrays a similar attitude. When Augustine is going to attack his academic position, Licentius interrupts him:

> 'Wait a moment, please.' Then, with a smile, he said: 'Tell me, are you already certain that you will win the argument?' 'Suppose that I am', I replied. 'You ought not, all the same, on that account abandon your cause, especially since this

[104] *ord.* 1,9, CSEL 63,127.

[105] *ord.* 1,28, CSEL 63,140: '*Tum ille ubi se ad definiendum cogi audiuit, quasi aqua frigida adspersus exhorruit et turbatiore uultu me intuens atque, ut fit, ipsa trepidatione subridens: quid hoc est rei? Quid quasi tibi uideor, inquit, annuere? Nescio, quo aduenticio spiritu me credis inflatum. statimque sese animans: aut fortasse, ait, aliquid mecum est*?' (translation: Russell, *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 55).

[106] Similar situations occur in *ord.* 1,13 and *Acad.* 1,6.

> discussion between us has been undertaken to train you and to incite you to cultivate your mind'.[107]

Augustine's announced attack on Licentius' position causes Licentius to retreat, as he fears his inability to resist Augustine. Augustine, however, reminds him of the fact that this fear should not make him retreat, for thus he will deny himself the privilege of learning. It seems as if Licentius is rather led by a fear of being defeated, than by a desire to learn.

This brings me to the major underlying moral weakness that is exposed by the corrective operation of disputation at Cassiciacum: pride. The fear of losing face is a form of pride: the desire to present oneself as self-sufficient before others. In the *Soliloquia*, Augustine observes that there is no better way to find the truth than through questions and answers, but at the same time there is almost nobody who is not ashamed to suffer defeat in a disputation. As a consequence, the learning process is frustrated by human competitiveness.[108]

A famous example of such a situation can be found in *De ordine* 1,29–30. Licentius and Trygetius are engaged in a discussion about the divinity of Christ. During the discussion, Augustine corrects Trygetius when he argues that we call the Father God in the proper sense of the word and not Christ. Trygetius is ashamed of having made this doctrinal mistake and therefore does not want his words to be written down. Licentius, however, insists that Trygetius' words must be recorded. Augustine interprets this response as a clear token of Licentius' desire for personal glory. According to Augustine, Licentius had responded 'after the custom of boys, or rather after the custom of men—oh what a crime!—of nearly all men . . . as though the question were being debated among us for the purpose of winning glory.'[109] Augustine rebukes Licentius for this behaviour, but Trygetius, in his turn, laughs at Licentius because he is being rebuked. Augustine then rebukes both of them for their neglect of the seriousness of the undertaking. They both seem to be engaged in dialogue for the sake of personal glory, rather than out of love for the truth itself and the desire to find it. Augustine emphasizes that their eternal destiny is concerned here: 'Believe me, there are some who are called upwards; others are let loose into the depths.'[110] Not a socially constructed self-image,

[107] *Acad.* 2,17, CCL 29,27: '*Cui ego cum respondere coepissem: expecta, inquit, quaeso paululum. Ac post arridens: dic mihi, ait, oro te, iamne certus es de uictoria tua?—tum ego: fac me, inquam, certum esse; non ideo tamen tu causam tuam debes deserere, praesertim cum haec inter nos disputatio suscepta sit exercendi tui causa et ad elimandum animum prouocandi*' (translation: John. J. O'Meara, *Against the Academics*, 82).

[108] *sol.* 2,14. Cf. Gilian Clark, 'Can we Talk? Augustine and the Possibility of Dialogue', in *The End of Dialogue in Late Antiquity*, edited by Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 117–34 (126–7).

[109] *ord.* 1,29, CSEL 63,141: '*Puerorum scilicet more uel potius hominum—pro nefas!—paene omnium, quasi uero gloriandi causa inter nos illud ageretur.*'

[110] *ord.* 1,29, CSEL 63,141: '*Alii sunt, credite, alii sunt qui sursum vocantur, alii qui in profunda laxantur.*'

but the inner disposition of the soul is decisive for one's eternal destiny.[111] Therefore, they should help each other on the path towards wisdom, instead of laughing at each other's mistakes. Augustine asks his pupils to pay him as their tutor with mutual friendship rather than with money. In other words, they would do him, who is concerned for the wellbeing of their souls, the greatest favour if they do not use each other in dialogue for the sake of personal victory, but rather help each other to find the truth together.

Despite this clear rebuke, Licentius seems not to have grasped Augustine's point and asks what they have done wrong. Augustine then explains that they try to introduce into philosophy the 'pest of enfeebling jealousy and empty boasting' (*aemulationis tabificae atque inanis iactantiae . . . pestem*), which flourished in the school of rhetoric that Augustine had just left. He says that he had already been suffering there from pupils who did not study for the beauty of the subjects themselves, but in order to gain praise. Augustine is afraid that, now that he deters Licentius and Trygetius from this vanity and illness (*uanitate morboque deterrere*), no motivation to continue in philosophy will remain. Licentius promises that he will do better, but nevertheless asks that their mistake can be erased from the tablet. Trygetius proposes that it remains there as a punishment that *deters* them from relapsing into the same mistake. Their desire for fame is restrained by the threat of publicly losing face on record.[112] Thus, the threat of punishment (losing face in front of others) is a means to suppress their evil passion for glory, until their will is changed for the better. The threat of punishment is made part of their process of education.

The aforementioned examples show how Augustine uses dialectics to expose his pupils to the sinful motivations that lurk below the surface of their philosophical endeavours: they either prove reluctant because they prefer other things to seeking truth, or are hesitant to engage in dialogue, as they fear to lose face. It is easier to listen to the teacher than to risk losing face in front of the class, and 'on record'. In one instance, Augustine uses 'shock' therapy to restrain their inclinations, but this only has a superficial effect. He also uses the public recording of his pupils' mistakes to deter them from competitive behaviour. It is a means to restrain the evil will, hoping that it will be changed inwardly. All in all, the dialogues show that mere rational discipline is not

[111] The fact that Christian philosophy turns around the eternal destiny of the soul makes Augustine so serious about doing philosophy and explains his anger about his pupils' childish behaviour. See Michael Payne Steppat, *Die Schola von Cassiciacum. Augustins 'De ordine'* (Bad Honnef: Bock & Herchen, 1980), 80–7. Cf. also *Acad.* 2,9,22.

[112] *ord.* 1,30, CSEL 63,142: '*Prorsus, inquit Trygetius, maneat nostra poena, ut ea ipsa quae nos inlicit fama flagello proprio a suo amore deterreat.*' On the purpose of writing the disputations down, Augustine says in *beata u.* 15, CCL 29,74: '*Ego semel praeceperam, ut nullum uerbum praeter litteras funderet. Ita adulescentem inter uerecundiam atque constantiam exagitatum tenebam*' ('I had once and for all ordered that no word should escape record. In this way I held the adolescent in suspense between hesitance and constancy').

enough to convert the soul from its evil habits. It reveals the presence of these habits, but does not provide their healing.

At this point it should be noted that neither Augustine's project, nor the discovery of its limited effects, are particularly Christian in nature. His pedagogy stands in the tradition of Platonic education. Against the Sophists, Plato had already argued that truth deserves priority over power.The true human community should be ruled by the truth, rather than by the power of rhetoric.[113] In the pedagogical process by which the people should be led to the knowledge of the truth, the rulers of the state can make use of punishment, in order to liberate the better part in the human soul from the dominion of the baser part.[114] Plato uses the imagery of surgery to illustrate his point. Augustine adopts this pedagogical model, and develops it over the course of his career, gradually incorporating it in the Pauline dialectics of law and grace.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOUL IN THE PROCESS OF ASCENT

The Discipline of Inner Dialogue: The Humbling Assault of Habit in the *Soliloquia*

In the previous section we have seen how Augustine used dialogue to bring his pupils to self-knowledge. But what about himself? Is he in need of some form of discipline after his conversion? On the one hand he depicts himself as free from the burdens of worldly loves. A new life has begun. He knows that there is a long way to go yet, but he is full of hope. He seems to believe that there are men who have already reached the happy life here on earth and seems to hope to become one of them through the exercise of Christian philosophy.[115]

[113] Jaeger, *Paideia* III, 292ff. Jaeger also points to the medical influence on Plato's understanding of the office of ruler. The ruler-philosopher needs to be a doctor for his subjects.

[114] Plato, *Republic*, 590e–591b; Plato, *Gorgias*, 478b–e. For a Christian appeal to Plato on this matter, see Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, 1,8,67; 1,9,75.

[115] *Acad,* 3,43. In the *retr.* 1,2, CCL 57,11 Augustine confirms that in Cassiciacum he still thought that the wise could reach happiness during his life in the corruptible body. It seems that he regarded Manlius Theodorus as having reached this state. In *Retractationes* 1,2 he revokes both his former ideas about the attainability of happiness and his judgement about Theodorus: '*Displicet autem illic quod Mallio Theodoro, ad quem librum ipsum scripsi, quamuis docto et christiano uiro, plus tribui quam deberem quod tempore uitae huius in solo animo sapientis dixi habitare beatam uitam, quomodolibet se habeat corpus eius, cum perfectam cognitionem Dei, hoc est quo homini maior esse non possit, in futura uita speret Apostolus, quae sola beata uita dicenda est, ubi et corpus incorruptibile atque immortale spiritui sui sine ulla molestia uel reluctatione subdetur*.' There is much discussion on whether the early Augustine really thought that perfection was possible in this life, or that this was only a matter of theory and aspiration. I take a middle position in this discussion. At Cassiciacum Augustine was both a man full of hope and a

Over against the Academics, he emphasizes that the truth can be found. And to Romanianus he joyfully exclaims that the God whom Christian philosophy promises to reveal is already revealing himself to him, albeit through shining clouds (*lucidas nubes*).[116] On the other hand, Augustine is aware of the danger of self-delusion. One can regard oneself as quite healthy in comparison to others who are even more ill, but this does not make one's judgement true. One should be aware of the danger of constructing a deceptive self-image, which covers the remaining influence of the old self. This is the pride of the converted self.

Augustine already warns of the danger of self-deception in *De beata uita*. He draws the attention of his readers to a great mountain that is located in front of the harbour of philosophy. This mountain stands for the 'proud passion for empty glory' (*superbum studium inanissimae gloriae*). Both people from within the harbour and those who are still approaching it are tempted to ascend this mountain and assume the role of a teacher. On the one hand, they teach those who are approaching the harbour the difficulties and dangers of entering it. On the other hand, they regard themselves as if they have already reached the fatherland. Their position as teachers seduces them to look down upon their 'pupils' and to think of themselves as already possessing the happy life. Augustine seems to say: people can use their progression in the life of philosophy, in relation to others, as a basis of being content with themselves, ignoring the infirmity that still inheres in them. Thus, such people deceive themselves with a self-image that has no substance (*uanissima gloria*). They put their trust in it, thinking that it supports them. But eventually it collapses and they are absorbed in the darkness beneath them; they are snatched away from the 'splendid dwelling' that they had almost contemplated.[117] Augustine's words sound like Jesus' judgement upon the foolish builder who built his house on the sand, instead of on a rock (Matt. 7:24–9; Luke 6:47–9). His house seemed stable until the storms put its foundation on trial and made it fall 'with a great crash'.[118]

Many scholars think that Augustine refers here to the Neoplatonists, especially because Augustine's description has much in common with his description of them in *Confessions* 7,27.[119] We should not forget, however, that

man who evermore discovered the influence of *consuetudo's* remnants upon his soul. For different positions in this discussion, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 139–50 ('The Lost Future'); Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 164; Topping, *Happiness and Wisdom*, 157–66.

[116] *Acad.* 1,3, CCL 29,5. O'Connell regards this as a reference to the transfiguration of Christ. See O'Connell, 'The Visage of Philosophy at Cassiciacum', *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994), 65–76 (74), with reference to O'Connell, *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 175–7.

[117] *beata u.* 1,3, CCL 29,66: '. . . *Inflatos sibi superambulantes succrepante fragili solo demergat ac sorbeat, eisque in tenebras revolutis, eripiat luculentam domum, quam pene iam viderant.*'

[118] I owe this suggestion to Van Reyn, *Fortuna Caeca*, vol. 2, 185.

[119] For an analysis of similarities, see Georg Pfligersdorffer, *Augustino Praeceptori. Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Augustinus zum 1600 Jahre Jubiläum der Taufe Augustins* (Salzburg:

Augustine also sees the danger of pride tempting those who are already in the harbour of Christian philosophy. In other words, he himself is in danger of self-delusion (and he might also implicitly warn Manlius Theodorus here). This interpretation of the passage is confirmed by what Augustine says about himself in the *Soliloquia*: we often think of ourselves as healthy when we compare our illness to that of others.[120] As Augustine is a teacher who is spiritually more mature than his pupils, he is himself tempted to underestimate the remnants of his past self when he compares himself to others.

This is particularly attested in the inner dialogue, which Augustine wrote down in the first book of the *Soliloquia*. As Augustine says later in his *Confessions*, this dialogue expresses 'the most intimate feeling of my mind with myself and to myself before Thee'.[121] This inner dialogue can be interpreted as Augustine's inner battle with his conscience, before God. One part of Augustine emphasizes the progress he has already made. The other part of Augustine, however, his *ratio*, challenges Augustine's pretences and wants to bring him to the awareness that below his admirable resolutions concerning his new life, the remnants of the old life are still present and make themselves felt.[122] Finally, when confronted with his reaction to a lustful dream, he surrenders his pride and admits his inability to diagnose his own spiritual condition, entrusting himself again to God as the only true judge and healer of his soul.

In the beginning of the dialogue, in *sol.* 1,16 Augustine expresses his desire to know nothing more than God and the soul, but has to concede that he is not sure whether this love is really undivided:

> I might answer that, in my present frame of mind, I love nothing else, but it would be more cautious to say I do not know. For it has often happened to me that, when I thought that nothing else could disturb me, something nevertheless came into my mind which affected me much differently than I had expected. Similarly, although something may not have bothered me at all when it merely came into my thought, yet when it did actually happen, it annoyed me more than I had anticipated.[123]

Abakus Verlag, 1987), 33–58 (49–53). For an overview of different positions, see Van Reyn, *Fortuna Caeca*, vol. 2, 184–6.

[120] *sol.* 1,25. In *ep.* 3,1 (386) Augustine confesses that he feels flattered to be called happy or almost happy by his friend Nebridius, but that his conscience objected to this qualification. He refers to the *Soliloquia* for substantiation of this self-evaluation.

[121] *conf.* 9,8.

[122] Stephan. A. Cooper rightly argues that this theme indicates that Augustine had already grasped more of the Pauline duality between flesh and spirit than is sometimes assumed. See Stephan. A. Cooper, 'Scripture at Cassiciacum: I Cor. 13:13 in the Soliloquies', *Augustinian Studies* 27/2 (1996), 21–47.

[123] *sol.* 1,16, CSEL 89,25: '*Possem respondere nihil me amare amplius, pro eo sensu qui mihi nunc est, sed tutius respondeo nescire me. Nam saepe mihi usu euenit ut, cum alia nulla re me crederem conmoueri, ueniret tamen aliquid in mentem, quod me multo aliter atque praesumpseram pungeret.*

Here, Augustine confesses that there can be a difference between the actual and the imagined state of one's soul. One can have decided to want to know God and the soul, but subconsciously the soul can still be bound by the love for sensible things, and by the fear of losing them. Augustine must indeed admit that his soul still suffers from three kinds of fear: the fear of losing friends, the fear of physical pain, and the fear of death. Therefore, *ratio* concludes that Augustine is still 'perturbed by all the ills and disorders of the soul' and is therefore not yet able to know God. His eyes still love darkness to a great extent and are therefore still ill equipped to see the sun.[124] Augustine, however, defends himself, pointing to the extent to which his health has already improved. In response, *ratio* sets out to challenge Augustine's claims, first by asking him whether he still desires riches, a wife, and food. Augustine honestly answers that he has ceased to desire riches after reading the *Hortensius*; that he recently stopped desiring women; and that he only desires food for the sustenance of his body. With regard to his desire for a wife, however, Augustine's answer betrays the said uncertainty about his own inner life. He says: 'I have commanded myself (*mihi imperavi*)—with due justice and good reason, I believe—for the liberation of my soul not to desire, not to seek, not to marry a wife.'[125] *Ratio*, the other part of Augustine's self, responds that it is not interested in what Augustine has decided, but whether he is still struggling with *libido* or not. Augustine responds that his desire for a wife has ceased and that he recalls this desire with dread and distaste. But he seems to feel that he is on instable ground here, for he asks *ratio*: 'What more do you want?' Augustine tries to prove his victory over *libido* before the tribunal of conscience, but he feels that the evidence he gives does not provide full certainty.

Ratio continues to challenge Augustine's claims, now confronting him with certain attractive goods, in order to test whether the desire for them is really extinguished from his soul, or merely inactive for a time, because the objects of the desire are absent and presently do not titillate the mind. Augustine responds that he only loves these goods (friends, honour, a wife, bodily well-being), not in order to enjoy them as such, but merely to the extent that they help him to embrace wisdom and truth. He would use them in order to enjoy God. All of Augustine's answers express his presumed readiness to see God. *Ratio*, however, warns him that the beauty of wisdom only shows herself to lovers who are completely chaste.

Item saepe, quamuis in cogitationem res aliqua incidens non me peruellerit, re uera tamen eueniens perturbauit plus quam putabam.'

[124] *sol.* 1,16, CSEL 89,25: '*Omnibus igitur adhuc morbis animi et perturbationibus agitaris. Quaenam ergo talium oculorum impudentia est, velle illum solem videre*?'

[125] *sol.* 1,17, CSEL 89,27: '*. . . satis, credo, iuste atque utiliter pro libertate animae meae mihi imperaui non cupere, non quaerere, non ducere uxorem*.'

Augustine now becomes impatient. *Ratio* promised him to show God, but constantly reminds him of the impediments to seeing God. Augustine claims to have met the requirements: he only loves wisdom for its own sake and loves or fears other things *propter ipsam*. So, what are we waiting for? Why does his reason continue torturing him by questioning his readiness for the vision of God?[126] *Ratio* then advises Augustine to make himself free of the glue of senses, in order to be able to flee from darkness to light. Augustine, however, deems this impossible as long as the light does not reveal itself to him. Of course, he will love the light above everything else if it reveals itself to him. At this point *ratio* rebukes Augustine for this way of reasoning. Augustine switches roles with God. First he declares himself healthy and then blames God for the fact that he does not see God. As if the bodily eye will no longer love darkness, when it sees the sun. Only an eye that is healed from its love for darkness can see the sun; otherwise it will turn back to darkness, when the sun reveals itself to it.[127] Augustine is struggling here with his fractured self. He knows that truth can only be contemplated through virtue, and rather than concluding from his present situation that he is apparently not yet ready for contemplation, he blames God for not showing himself to him. In this behaviour Augustine's prides comes to the fore.

Ratio responds by giving a diagnosis of Augustine's spiritual state:

> In this the mind is often at fault, that it thinks itself and boasts itself sound; and because it does not yet see, it complains as if it is within its rights. But that Beauty knows when she should show herself. For she herself administers the office of physician, and better understands who are healthy than the very ones who are healed. But we, as far as we have emerged (from darkness), seem to ourselves to see; but how far we were immersed (in darkness), and how far we had made progress, we are not permitted either to think or feel, and in comparison with a more severe disease we believe ourselves to be healthy.[128]

Reason then reminds Augustine of the fact that the night after the day on which he declared himself free of improper loves and ready for vision, he had a dream in which he was enticed by the mental images of a woman, not as

[126] *sol.* 1,22, CSEL 89, 34: '*Quid ergo adhuc suspendor infelix et cruciatu miserabili differor*?'

[127] *sol.* 1,24. Cf. *conf.* 7, 16, CCL 27, 103: where Augustine reveals that upon gazing at the light above his mind, he was immediately struck back by it and experienced that he was not yet able to see it: '*Et reuerberasti infirmitatem aspectus mei radians in me uehementer, et contremui amore et horrore: et inueni longe me esse a te in regione dissimilitudinis*.'

[128] *sol.* 1,25, CSEL 89, 37–8: '*Et in eo saepe fallitur animus ut sanum se putet et sese iactet; et quia nondum uidet, ueluti iure conqueritur. Nouit autem illa pulchritudo, quando se ostendat. Ipsa enim etiam medici fungitur munere meliusque intellegit, qui sint sani, quam iidem ipsi qui sanantur. Nos autem, quantum emerserimus, uidemur nobis uidere; quantum autem mersi eramus et quo progressi fueramus, nec cogitare nec sentire permittimur et in comparatione grauioris morbi sanos esse nos credimus*.'

intensely as before, but nevertheless more intensely than he had expected.[129] Reason concludes: 'Thus that most secret physician showed you both: from where you have escaped by his cure and what remains to be cured.'[130]

Augustine is heavily affected by this experience. His pride has been challenged by it. He summons his mind to be silent and not to dig deeper into the abysses of his soul. Augustine decides to no longer judge himself with regard to his health, but to entrust himself completely to the Physician who knows him better than he knows himself and who promises him to heal him from his sickness.[131] 'You are right in saying, that he whom I burn to see, himself knows when I am in health; let him do what pleases him: when it pleases him, let him show himself; I now commit myself completely to his clemency and care. Once for all do I believe that he does not fail to lift up those who are so disposed towards him.'[132]

In his 'battle' with his own mind Augustine has been conquered. The divine Physician himself used a dream, an involuntary movement of memory, to confront Augustine with the remaining stains of his past loves.[133] The law of God, present in his conscience, exposes him to this reality. Thus God uses the punishment of sin (*consuetudo*) and the law of the mind to execute his healing work in Augustine. He compels Augustine to be honest regarding his sinful state and to forego his attempt to construct a deceptive self-image. The genuineness of Augustine's conversion expresses itself in the fact that he does not stick to his pride, but surrenders himself to the help of God. Although in his early

[129] In his later works, Augustine says that sexual dreams are the consequence of concupiscence, which in its turn is the punishment of original sin. See Martine Dulaey, *Le Rêve dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris: Institut d'ÉÉtudes Augustiniennes, 1967), 138.

[130] *sol.* 1,25, CSEL 89,38: '*Secretissimus ille medicus utrumque monstraret, et unde cura eius euaseris et quid curandum remaneat.*'

[131] For the *medicus*-theme in Cassiciacum, see D. Doucet, 'Le Thème du médicin dans les premiers dialogues philosophiques de Saint Augustin', *Augustiniana* 39 (1989), 447–64. On the application of this idea within Augustine's Christology (*Christus medicus*), see P. Eijkenboom, *Het Christus-Medicusmotief in de preken van Sint Augustinus* (Assen, 1960); T. F. Martin, 'Paul the Patient. *Christus Medicus* and *Stimulus Carnis* (2 Cor. 12:7): A Consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology', *Augustinian Studies* 32/2 (2001), 219–156 (which also treats the 'violent' aspect of Christ's medicinal work). Augustine might have derived this theme both from the Gospels (Luke 5:31–2) and from Cicero who described philosophy as *medicina animi* (*Tusc. Disp.* 3). This connection between medicine and philosophy was widespread among all philosophical schools in Antiquity.

[132] *sol.* 1,26 CSEL 89,39: '*Certe dicis, quod ille ipse, quem uidere ardeo, nouerit quando sim sanus. Faciat quod placet; quando placet, sese ostendat; iam me totum eius clementiae curaeque conmitto. Semel de illo credidi, quod sic erga se adfectos subleuare non cesset.*'

[133] This passage shows that Augustine was already aware of the force of habit within the converted person, immediately after his conversion. At this point I agree with Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 55–63 and disagree with Lenka Karfikova (*Grace and the Will According to Augustine* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 29), who argues that this strain of thought emerges for the first time in *diu. quest.* 83,40. Harrison highlights the similarities between *sol.* 1 and *conf.* 10 with regard to Augustine's analysis of the inability of the mind to ascent to God and its need of divine grace.

years Augustine remains rather positive about the possibilities of attaining the contemplation of God in this life, the experience of failed contemplation at Cassiciacum remains with him as a reminder of his fractured self.[134]

Punishment within the Process of Ascent

In *De quantitate animae*, a work written shortly after his baptism, Augustine gives a similar reflection on the limits of contemplation for the converted person. Although strictly speaking, this work does not belong to the period under discussion in this chapter, it is helpful to illustrate the trajectory that Augustine has taken in his understanding of Christian progress. It illustrates the abiding function of corrective discipline in the Christian life.

From section 70 Augustine sketches a trajectory of ascent via the levels of the soul. The fourth level is the moment of genuine Christian conversion.[135] He writes:

> From this point the soul dares to rank itself not only before its own body . . . but even before the whole material world itself, and it dares to think that the good of the world is not its good . . . The more it becomes the cause of its own delight, the more it dares to withdraw from baser things and wholly to cleanse itself and to make itself spotless and stainless. It dares to be strong against every enticement that tries to move it from its resolution and purpose, to esteem human society, to desire for another nothing that it would not wish for itself; to obey authority and the laws of wise men, and to believe that through these God speaks to it.[136]

However, Augustine continues,

> in this noble task of the soul there is still toil, and against the vexations and allurements of the world a hard and bitter fight; in this work of purification there is underneath a fear of death, often not strong but sometimes overpowering—not strong when its faith is most firm . . . that all things are so governed by the providence and justice of God that death cannot possibly come unjustly to anyone, even though the person who inflicts death be unjust. But, death is greatly feared on this plane now, when the providence of God is so much the less firmly trusted as it is the more anxiously looked for, and it is the less seen as tranquillity

[134] For an analysis of Augustine's Christianization of Neoplatonic contemplation at Cassiciacum, see Kenny, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity*, 61–92.

[135] Kenny, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity*, 98.

[136] *an. quant.* 73, CSEL 89,120–1: '*Hinc enim anima se non solum suo . . . sed ipsi etiam uniuerso corpori audet praeponere bonaque eius bona. . . . quo magis se delectat, eo magis sese abstrahere a sordibus totamque emaculare ac mundissimam et comptissimam reddere, roborare se aduersus omnia, quae de proposito ac sententia demouere moliuntur, societatem humanam magni pendere nihilque uelle alteri, quod sibi nolit accidere, sequi auctoritatem ac praecepta sapientium et per haec loqui sibi deum credere*' (translation: FC 2, 140).

> grows less through fear—tranquillity so requisite for pursuing the study of these most puzzling matters.[137]

The soul that has decided to live the life of virtue, and to free itself from worldly enticements, experiences on a deeper level the fear of death. Exactly when the converted person has set his will on ascending to God through virtue, he is inwardly confronted with the power of 'the old self', which still delights more in its own temporal life than in the justice of divine providence through which all things, good and evil, are well ordered. This awareness leads to an even greater fear in man, a fear for divine judgement after death. He starts to consider that if his new self condemns his old self, how much more God will condemn him, when the body has been put off.[138] In other words, after conversion the fear of hell increases, because through conversion the human person grows in the knowledge of his disordered self. This confrontation with his abiding moral impurity and divine judgement persuades the converted person that he stands in need of divine justice to be inwardly purified. This realization leads the soul to entrust itself to God's justifying help: 'To [the justice of the supreme and true God] in the difficult task of purifying itself, the soul entrusts itself with complete filial devotion and trust to be helped and made perfect.'[139]

However, the soul aspires to grow further. By God's help it reaches a state of moral self-possession (*tranquillitas*), and begins to seek the contemplation of God himself in what Augustine calls 'the state of entrance' (*ingressio*). At this point, however, Augustine again warns his readers. It is dangerous to direct the eye of the soul to the truth when it has not yet been completely purified. The effect of this attempt could be that the soul is so blinded by the vision of truth, that it considers the truth to be evil and turns back to a life in the flesh:

> Those who wish to do this before they are cleansed and healed are so driven back by the light of truth that they may think there is in it not only nothing good, but much of evil. They deny it the name of truth and, by reason of pitiable yielding to

[137] *an. quant.* 73, CSEL 89,221: '*In hoc tam praeclaro actu animae inest adhuc labor et contra huius mundi molestias atque blanditias magnus acerrimusque conflictus. In ipso enim purgationis negotio subest metus mortis saepe non magnus, saepe uero uehementissimus; non magnus tum, cum robustissime creditur… tanta dei prouidentia iustitiaque gubernari omnia, ut nulli mors inique accidere possit, etiamsi eam forte iniquus intulerit. Vehementer autem formidatur mors in hoc iam gradu, cum et illud eo creditur infirmius, quo sollicitius quaeritur, et eo ipso minus uidetur, quo tranquillitas propter metum minor est inuestigandis obscurissimis rebus pernecessaria*' (translation: FC 2, 140).

[138] *an. quant.* 73, CSEL 89,221: '*Deinde quo magis sentit anima eo ipso, quo proficit, quantum intersit inter puram et contaminatam, eo magis timet, ne deposito isto corpore minus eam deus possit quam se ipsam ferre pollutam*.'

[139] *an. quant.* 73, CSEL 89,222: '*Cui [iustitia summi et ueri dei] sese in opere tam difficili mundationis suae adiuuandam et perficiendam piissime tutissimeque conmittit*' (translation: FC 2, 140).

> carnal indulgence, they draw back into the caverns of their own darkness, enduring it because they are ill and cursing the only remedy of their distemper. Whence, divinely inspired, the prophet most fittingly prays: 'Create a clean heart in me, O Lord, and renew a right spirit in my breast.' The spirit is right, I believe, if it keeps the soul in its quest for truth from losing the way and going wrong.[140]

This experience resembles the one Augustine describes in the *Soliloquia*. If one proudly presumes that one is ready to see God and is struck down (*reuerberatur*) by God's light, one is in danger of holding to one's own presumed purity. In doing so, one in fact returns to one's own carnality. Instead, the soul should respond with humble conversion upon its experience of divine discipline, its being 'beaten down'. Rather than holding on to its alleged goodness, it should turn back to the way (*cursus*) that God has commanded it to follow, the way of healing authority. If the soul humbly holds on to the path of authority, it is promised to see God in the end.[141] More explicitly than in the *Soliloquia*, Augustine affirms in *De quantitate animae* that this process can be completed in this life. Great and incomparable souls have attained the beatific vision, albeit not without the help of divine grace.[142]

My conclusion is that *Soliloquia* book 1 and *De quantitate animae* 73 show that from the beginning Augustine was convinced that even after conversion, forms of divine judgement of sin are still needed in order to make the converted soul realize its inner weakness. In one sense darkness has been left, but in another sense darkness is still present within the soul: the memory of past loves still titillates the mind.[143] When the providence of God confronts the mind with the things it loves or fears to lose, it discovers the presence of the loves it believed had left behind. Thus it obtains a useful fear of the judgement of God (who fathoms the human heart more profoundly and honestly than it can fathom itself). The converted person uses this fear to flee into the embrace of Christ's authority for help, in order to be cleansed inwardly. This is what Augustine did when he registered for the catechumenate and was baptized in 387.

[140] *an. quant.* 75, CSEL 89,223: '*Quod qui prius uolunt facere quam mundati et sanati fuerint, ita illa luce reuerberantur ueritatis, ut non solum nihil boni, sed etiam mali plurimum in ea putent esse atque ab ea nomen ueritatis abiudicent et cum quadam libidine et uoluptate miserabili in suas tenebras, quas eorum morbus pati potest, medicinae maledicentes refugiant. Unde diuino adflatu et prorsus ordinatissime illud a propheta dicitur: cor mundum crea in me, deus, et spiritum rectum innoua in uisceribus meis [Ps 50:12]. Spiritus enim rectus est, credo, quo fit, ut anima in ueritate quaerenda deuiare atque errare non possit*' (translation: FC 4, 142).

[141] *an. quant.* 76. Cf. *mor.* 1,11.

[142] J. P. Kenny, 'Confession and the Contemplative Self in Augustine's Early Works', *Augustinian Studies* 38/1 (2007), 145. See also idem, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity*, 101.

[143] *sol.* 1,26.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has investigated Augustine's thought on the redemptive meaning of divine judgement in the Cassiciacum Dialogues.

The first context in which Augustine discusses a form of divine judgement is where he speaks about the coercive force of *fortuna* (especially *De beata uita* and *Contra Academicos*). Although he uses a pagan term, he intends to develop a Christian concept of divine providence, aimed against the Manichees whom he left, but also distinguished from Stoic and Neoplatonic understandings of it. With Stoic and Neoplatonic philosophy, Augustine affirms that everything that happens is encapsulated in an all-encompassing order or law, but unlike them he perceives this order as the personal involvement of the Creator God in human life.

This God is at work in Augustine's life and in the life of Romanianus as the one who gives temporal goods, but also takes them away. Augustine interprets his and his patron's experience of suffering as a form of divine discipline. Through the mishaps that Augustine and Romanianus experienced in their lives, God is forcing them to lay down the pride of establishing their own beatitude, which they had expected to find in their secular careers. Their lives function as examples of God's way of dealing with the human soul, which has lost itself in the love for perishable things. He awakens it through the violent strikes of fortune. In his fear and pain man experiences the unhappiness of his soul, his *non esse cum deo*, his being under the law. Augustine regards these experiences as wake-up calls for the soul, admonitions to ascend to the intelligible world. In his disciplinary understanding of suffering, Augustine echoes familiar Stoic and Neoplatonic ideas, but recontextualizes them within a Christian framework.

Augustine observes that suffering does not automatically lead to conversion. The human soul is naturally inclined to hold on to its love for temporal things and to use religion and philosophy to strengthen itself against God. Pagan religion is a means to serve carnal desires by establishing an alliance with evil spirits. Stoic philosophy strives to attain independence of the external world, and to establish internal tranquillity in order to be happy in this world.[144] Scepticism (as popularly understood) does not even believe that we can transcend the world of sense-perception. The Christian heresy of Manichaeism, in Augustine's eyes, likewise cannot help the soul to find the beatitude that it was made for, because it understands God and the soul in terms of matter. The only philosophy that leads man in the right direction is Platonism (resurrected in the philosophy of Plotinus), because it teaches that the soul finds its true home beyond the world of space and time. However, Augustine

[144] This is why Augustine calls Stoicism a philosophy of this world, which is rejected by Paul in Col. 2:8.

argues, man cannot attain his fatherland by his own spiritual powers, as the Platonist philosophers teach. The path to ascend to the goal of Platonic philosophy is the authority of Christ, in whom the Logos has come down to lead the soul to God.[145]

The *proprium* of Christian philosophy is that it teaches that the God whom we encounter in the buffetings of fortune has come down in order to lead us to him. The coercion of God is aimed at making us submit to his healing authority. This is why Augustine advises Romanianus to pray to Christ in order to hold course towards the harbour of philosophy. He moreover depicts Christ as the one who descended to our level of understanding by first catching our attention through his power and then leading us onward, through his precepts, from a love for the sensible world to a love for himself as God. The dual character of the divine pedagogy in the Old and New Testaments (coercion and rational teaching), which Augustine develops in his Thagastan writings, already announces itself here.

A second context in which Augustine thematizes the disciplining value of judgement is in the philosophical disputations he organizes for his pupils. Through rational disputation—argument and counter-argument—the dialogue partners correct each other's opinions about the truth and thus help each other to clear their minds for the truth. The practice of dialogue in Augustine's school at Cassiciacum challenges this ideal of the rational purgation of the mind. In the first instance, Augustine presents his pupils as eager to philosophize, as if they love the truth above everything else. However, through the 'violence' of disputation it becomes clear that there is a difference between their perceived or pretended self and their real self. They are confronted with their fear of losing face and with their desire for praise. Augustine hopes that his *rebuke* of their pride will lead to conversion. But it does not come to pass. Licentius only experiences a temporary conversion, but is eventually caught again by his past loves for poetry and honour. Trygetius and Licentius get caught up in a fight about the recording of their mistakes, out of fear of losing face. Eventually their quarrel remains recorded in order to restrain their inclinations to fight for their own praise. As such, the disputations of Augustine's pupils show first that the compulsion inherent in philosophical dialogue reveals the abiding presence of the old self (which loves itself more than the truth) and second that the threat of punishment can be a means of restraining this old self until the love for the truth is born in the process of education. The threat of punishment thus facilitates the moral growth of man. This idea also existed in classical educational theories. Augustine will later use it in his reflections on the function of punishment in the history of salvation.

[145] At several places, Augustine emphasizes the consubstantiality of the Logos with God, thus opposing the subordination of the Logos to the One in Plotinus.

Augustine himself looks very much like his pupils in the first book of the *Soliloquia*. We witness a man who wants to be more than he is. When one part of himself pretends to desire only God and the soul and nothing else, the other part challenges this claim. Is his pretended self really congruent with his real self? Through a dream, which stirred carnal passions more than he expected, Augustine is convinced of the remaining stains of his former habits. This experience provides his conscience with the decisive argument for the deceptive nature of his self-perception, allowing him to lay down his pride and entrust himself totally to God the Physician. God is the one who can adequately adjudge the impurity of his soul and who is able to cure him of it. This experience is accompanied both by an increasing fear for the divine judgement and an increasing trust upon Christ as the doctor of the soul.

At this point Augustine shows himself to have progressed further on the spiritual path than his pupils. They were confronted with their old selves through the force of disputation, but tried to preserve its interests. Even their self-restraint was motivated by a fear of losing their carnal interests (namely honour). They have not yet progressed towards a love of truth by which they condemn the strivings of their old self. Augustine has. He has acquired a fear of the divine judgement about his inner self and affirms this judgement about himself. He later describes this kind of fear as *timor castus*, as opposed to a *timor carnalis*. This fear leads him to seek help from God as the doctor of his soul. This medical imagery shows how Augustine applies the tradition of philosophical pedagogy to the process of spiritual maturation as a Christian: the transcendent God leads the Christian through the process of renewal, both teaching the soul its shortcomings and offering himself to it as its healer.

3

God's Pedagogy of the Embodied Soul

Augustine before his Ordination (387–391)

FROM ROME TO THAGASTE

After his baptism in Milan, Augustine travelled to Rome, stayed there for a year because of turmoil in Africa, and crossed the sea at the end of 388 in order to continue his life of Christian leisure in Thagaste, in a community of like-minded brothers, closely associated to the Catholic Church.[1]

Furthermore, he put his literary production more explicitly in the service of the Church, especially by refuting the theology of the Manichees, his former co-religionists. In Rome he started writing two books on the morals of the Catholic Church and the morals of the Manichees (*de moribus ecclesiae et Manichaeorum*), and in Thagaste he undertook his first attempt to offer an exegesis of Genesis, mainly to help fellow Catholics to defend themselves against Manichaean attacks on the Old Testament. Augustine also finished his anti-Manichaean masterpiece, *De uera religione*, before he entered the priesthood in 391. Around this time he also wrote the sixth book of *De musica*, the only work on the liberal arts that he managed to complete.

In this period, Augustine started to develop a distinctive Christian theology of creation, fall, and redemption through Christ. Against the Manichees he firmly defends the forensic character of the Christian religion. The evil we suffer does not come from another nature, but is the punishment of God upon the sin of man, by which man is called back to his Creator. At the same time, Augustine still largely understands the Christian faith from a pedagogical viewpoint. He still believes that man has some freedom of his own to respond positively to the admonitions of the divine law. Furthermore, he sees Christ's redemptive work still primarily in terms of example and teaching, and does not yet explicitly teach that Christ on the cross bore the punishment of the law on behalf of sinners.

[1] R. J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement: The Retreat of Cassiciacum and the "Monastary" of Thagaste', in *Studia Patristica* 5, edited by F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 329–40.

This chapter addresses three themes that are important for the central question of this book. The first part of the chapter discusses Augustine's understanding of the fall and its consequences. As an heir to the anti-Gnostic tradition of Clement and Origen, Augustine develops an interesting pedagogical understanding of the penal consequences of the fall against the Manichees. The second part of the chapter addresses Augustine's understanding of salvation history, and especially the function of divine chastisment within it. Is it true, as some scholars have argued, that Augustine has a progressive view of salvation history, in which believers stand less and less in need of divine chastisement? Is that typical only for the Old Testament, and transcended in the New? This chapter then closes with an account of Augustine's forced ordination. Augustine experienced this ordination as a divine chastisement of his proud self-image. This gives us insight in his personal experience of ongoing divine chasticement after his conversion, just as in the *Soliloquia*.

AUGUSTINE'S ANTI-MANICHAEAN THEOLOGY OF THE FALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Augustine develops a specifically Christian view of providence in his early works. His belief in the Creator's providential rule allows him to regard experiences of suffering as means through which God personally addresses humans, encouraging them to face the miserable state of their souls and to seek for salvation with him. Augustine further unfolds this theme in his Thagastan writings by putting it in the context of man's creation, his fall, and the divine curse that followed upon it. In response to Adam's sin, God inaugurated the history of mankind, in which man's soul is condemned to suffer in his mortal body. In this way, God reminds him of his original obligation, namely to subject himself to God and to rule over his body and the rest of creation. Augustine develops this view in direct opposition to Manichaean accounts of suffering. Therefore, I will first give an account of Augustine's interpretation of the Manichaean theology of suffering. Subsequently, I will describe Augustine's understanding of creation, man's fall, and God's penal-pedagogical response.

The Manichaean Theology of Suffering According to *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos*

Manichaeism regards the visible world as the result of a cosmological battle between two opposing principles: the realm of light (God) and the realm of

darkness (Satan). According to Manichaeism, this world came into being when the realm of darkness began to desire the kingdom of light and invaded it. The kingdom of light defended itself and so a cosmic battle began. The outcome of the battle was that some light particles were captured by the realm of darkness. This mixture of good and evil constituted the material for our present world. Every living being in reality (whether plant, animal, or human) contains these particles of light.[2] The aim of the Manichaean religion is to redeem them from matter in order to allow them to return to their origin. The sun and the moon are regarded as receptacles of the redeemed light particles, which transfer them back to the kingdom of light.

According to the Manichaean creation story, the first humans, Adam and Eve, were also created by the prince of darkness as a mixture of good and evil. Their souls came from the kingdom of light, and their bodies from the kingdom of darkness. He intended them to procreate and thus wrap as much light as possible in the chains of matter.[3] According to Manichaeism, the God of Genesis is this prince of darkness. The Manichaeans read the text 'God fashioned man from the mud of the earth and blew into him the spirit of life so that he was made a living soul' (Gen. 2:7), as saying that a part of God himself was turned into man's soul and wrapped in the fragile and suffering body which we now possess.[4] The prince of darkness wanted Adam and Eve to discover the divine identity of their souls, because this would allow them to side with the kingdom of light. Therefore, he gave them the commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In this way he would keep them under his control,[5] and fight his battle against the god of light.

The kingdom of light, however, came to the help of Adam and Eve by sending Jesus to them in paradise. He revealed himself in the form of the serpent and promised them that they would be like gods if they transgressed the commandment they had received. Thus it happened: they discovered that their souls were in fact divine and their bodies the evil invention of the prince of darkness.[6] This is the knowledge of good and evil, according to the Manichees.[7] As a consequence of their discovery, their eyes were opened

[2] For a summary of Augustine's representation of the Manichaean creation story, see *uera rel.* 9,16.

[3] *mor.* 2,73; J. Kevin Coyle, 'Mani, Manicheism', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 521–3; Gerald Bonner, 'Adam', in *A-L* vol. 1, 69–73. For more elaborate expositions of Manichaean cosmogony and anthropology, see Francois Décret, *L'Afrique manichéene, IVe & Ve siècles*, vols 1–2 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978).

[4] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,8–11.

[5] The Manichees regarded the religion of the Jews also as an invention of this morally repugnant being. He desired animal offerings, commanded to slaughter innocent people, and permitted or even commanded immoral behaviour of his most dedicated adherents (the patriarchs and the prophets). Cf. *c. Faust.* 22.

[6] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,38–9. [7] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,38.

and they became displeased with their naked bodies. This means: as soon as they discovered the divine nature of their souls, they became displeased with their own bodies and with the rest of temporal creation.[8] They 'discovered' that the mortal, suffering body, in which we live, and the changing temporal creation cannot be made by a good God, but rather come from an evil intruder.

In his commentary *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos*, Augustine interprets the sin of Adam and Eve as a prophecy of Manichaeism.[9] The logic of the first sin repeats itself in Manichaean dualism. Augustine's reasoning runs as follows. The root of sin is pride (*superbia*). Pride means that the human soul is no longer content with the place it received in the order of creation, namely under God and above the body. It begins to imagine itself as autonomous and self-sufficient. In other words, the soul starts to love itself as if it were God. As a result of this pride, the soul discovers its own nakedness and is displeased with it. The nakedness of man is a symbol for his place under God. It reminds him of his place in the order of reality, and teaches him that God himself denies him what he aspires (namely to be self-sufficient). But exactly this displeases him. Augustine writes: 'Having turned away from this [the divine light] and turned to himself, which is the meaning of taking a bite from that tree, he saw his own nakedness, and was displeased with himself as not having anything to call his very own.'[10] As a consequence, man starts to suppress his inferiority and accountability to God. He wants to be his own ruler, and be accountable to no one else.

This attitude becomes apparent in Adam's response to God's accusation after the transgression of the commandment. When God calls him to account, Adam blames 'the woman whom you gave me' (Gen. 3:12). In other words, Adam accuses God in order to excuse himself, and evade his accountability to God as his creature. If he cannot become God's equal in majesty and greatness, he tries to make God his equal and even his inferior by claiming that God is to be blamed for his sin, as he had given him the woman who seduced him.[11]

[8] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,38, CSEL 91,164: '*Sed istis etiam corpora sua displicent non propter poenalem mortalitatem, quam peccando meruimus, sed ita ut negent Deum esse corporum conditorem, tamquam apertis oculis carneis nuditas ista displiceat*.' Cf. *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,8.

[9] For more on Augustine's exegetical method used in *Gn. adu. Man.*, see Ludwig Fladerer, *Augustinus als Exeget. Zu seinen Kommentaren des Galaterbriefes und der Genesis* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010).

[10] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,24, CSEL 91,147: '*Nudus enim erat a simulatione, sed uestiebatur luce diuina. Unde auersus et ad seipsum conuersus, quod significat de illa arbore manducasse, nuditatem suam uidit et displicuit sibi ex eo, quod non habebat aliquid proprium*' (translation: WSA 1/13, 88).

[11] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,25, CSEL 91,147: '*Nihil est autem tam familiare peccantibus quam tribuere Deo uelle undecumque accusantur; et hoc de illa uena superbiae est, quoniam sic homo peccauit, cum uult esse par Deo, id est liber esse ab eius dominio sicut ille ab omni dominio liber est, quia ipse est Dominus omnium. Quoniam ergo in maiestate par illi esse non potuit, iam lapsus et iacens in peccato suo parem sibi eum facere conatur uel potius illum uult ostendere peccasse, se autem esse innocentem*.'

According to Augustine, this combination of pride and self-justification, apparent in the story of the fall, repeats itself in the anthropology of the Manichees. Their anthropology functions as a means to uphold man's self-divinization over against God. They argue that the soul of man is of the same nature as God. By consequence, it cannot be responsible for evil actions. Therefore, evil actions must have another origin, which is external from the soul, namely the mortal human body. This body does not belong to our proper selves (which are divine), but is the instrument of an evil nature at work in us. Therefore, if we are said to sin, in fact another nature sins in us.[12] We ourselves are not responsible for our entanglement in the flesh, but rather the power of darkness, which affects our souls through our bodies.[13]

In this way, Augustine argues, Manichaean dualism repeats the sin of Adam. It first declares the soul divine, and then exculpates the soul for its sins, by shifting the responsibility for sin to another nature. Thus, it uses the mortal body as a camouflage for the soul's rebellion against God and gives free way to its licentiousness.[14] It justifies those who want to live in the desires of the flesh, because it allows them to see their souls as mere victims of the kingdom of darkness. Augustine also applies this judgement to more ascetic versions of Manichaeism. Their ethics is based on the idea that not the soul itself is sinful because of it carnal thinking, but that evil resides in matter as such.[15] Their rigorous ethic might seem very pious, but still seeks the problem of evil in something external to the soul itself.

[12] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,40. It is, however, questionable whether Augustine does justice to the actual Manichaean position on this point. Drecoll has argued that 'Die Widerwilligkeit des schlechten Tuns [. . . nicht bedeutet] die völlige Verantwortungslosigkeit des Menschen, sondern nur, dass die aus dem Lichtreich stammende Seele dem Wirken des Teufels und der Eigendynamik des körperlichen Bereiches (noch) unterlegen ist.' See Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 191.

[13] In *uera rel.* 16, Augustine attributes a doctrine of the two souls to Manichaeism (*dua genera animarum*). This is an interpretation of the Manichaean dualism between body and soul, in which the body is seen as an active evil principle through which the *gens tenebrarum* threatens the good soul. Because of this autonomous dynamic of *caro*, also designated as *mens* or *spiritus*, Augustine argues that the Manichaeans in fact viewed man as consisting of two souls with different orientations. Although the Manichees did not express their anthropology in this way, conceptually Augustine's description seems to be right. Cf. J. Kevin Coyle, 'De duabus animabus', *Augustine through the Ages*, 287–8; Volker Henning Drecoll and Mirjam Kudella, *Augustin und der Manichäismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 148–9; Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 190–1. For a more elaborate description of the Manichaean doctrine of the soul and Augustine's, see Concetta Giuffre Scibona, 'The Doctrine of the Soul in Manichaeism and Augustine', in *'In Search of Truth'. Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism: Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, edited by J. A. van den Berg, A. Kotzé, T. Nicklas, and M. Scopello (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 377–418.

[14] On Manichaeism as fostering pride, see G. Madec, 'Connaissance de Dieu et actions de grâces: essai sur les citations de *l'Ép. Aux Romains* 1,18–25 dans l'œuvre de St. Augustin', *Recherches augustiniennes* 2 (1962), 273–309 (284); Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae*, 73.

[15] *uera rel.* 40, CCL 32,212. Augustine concludes: '*Facillimum est exsecrari carnem, difficillimum autem non carnaliter sapere.*'

Man's Creation

The preceding section depicted Augustine's representation of the Manichaean view of bodily suffering as a means of self-justification. Over against this account, Augustine develops his own view of suffering as the punishment of sin. He emphasizes that human suffering is the consequence of a primal choice, by which man opted to leave God, in order to establish his beatitude through action in the body. Man's mortality reminds him of his rebellion against God as a responsible agent, rather than of the dominion of an evil substance. The following section summarizes Augustine's early account of man's creation and fall, in order to illustrate how Augustine explains the origin of human suffering.

As the Genesis account reads, 'God fashioned the man from the mud of the earth and he blew into him the spirit of life and he was made a living soul' (Gen. 2:7). According to Augustine, this text says that God made man as a unity of soul and body. Against the Manichees he holds that man's soul is not a part of God and that his body is not the work of an evil creator.[16] The entire man is created by God from nothing. Man's soul consists of two parts, a rational part (*ratio*), which is symbolized by Adam, and an emotional part (*anima*), which is symbolized by Eve. The rational part of the soul is made after the image of God.[17] It is designed to lift itself upwards from the earth (as opposed to animals, which are directed towards the earth) and to contemplate intelligible realities. The emotional part of the soul is made to obey reason, so that the body is ruled properly.

Augustine calls the composite of soul (*ratio* and *anima*) and body *homo animalis*. This is the man who is made to contemplate God, but whom God still has to elevate to this state of contemplation. Thus Augustine expresses the ontological distinction between God and the human soul. The human soul does not contemplate God by nature, but stands in need of divine illumination in order to be able to contemplate God. Without the converting activity of God's Word and Spirit, man can only live according to his animal part. The Word of God grants man the knowledge of intelligible realities, whereas the Spirit connects the mind to these realities through love.[18]

Man becomes *homo spiritalis* when he receives the Spirit of God who enables the soul to inwardly contemplate 'immortal and intelligible delights'[19] through the

[16] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,8–11; *mor.* 2,21–2.

[17] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,28. Cf. *an. quant.* 55.

[18] On the contemplation of the divine ideas as beatifying the human soul, see *diu. qu.* 83, 46, 2, CCL 44A,73: '*. . . anima rationalis inter eas res, quae sunt a deo conditae, omnia superat et deo proxima est, quando pura est; eique in quantum caritate cohaeserit, in tantum ab eo lumine illo intellegibili perfusa quodammodo et inlustrata cernit non per corporeos oculos, sed per ipsius sui principale quo excellit, id est per intellegentiam suam, istas rationes, quarum uisione fit beatissima*.'

[19] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,12 (translation: WSA 1/13, 79).

Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24), who is the head of the rational soul (1 Cor. 11:3).[20] Genesis expresses this inner illumination by the words 'God placed man in paradise' (Gen. 2:8). In this state man received the commandment to 'guard paradise', that is to hold his middle position between God and the body, subjecting to the former and ruling the latter.[21] In this way the soul obeys the eternal law (*lex aeterna*). This law commands that the soul should love eternal things above temporal things and that reason should rule over the body and the lower soul.[22]

According to Augustine, man was created to merit reward through obedience to God's law. He merits eternal beatitude if he preserves his middle position, but merits misery if he refuses to do so.[23] God is the one who upholds and executes this law. If Adam kept the commandment of God, the Word of God would have led him to perfection.[24] He would have been stabilized in the state of contemplation. The flipside of the promise of reward, however, was the threat of punishment. If man transgressed God's commandment he would suffer the penalty for his disobedience in the loss of tranquillity of mind and slavery to the body. Thus he would come to know the difference between the good that he left and the evil for which he had opted.[25] This punishment should not be conceived as a kind of 'irrational' vengeance, but rather as the rational and just consequence of disobeying the commandment that guarantees life.[26] If man starts to love lower goods, instead of the higher ones he was made for, he deprives himself of his destiny and suffers the miserable consequences. As Augustine has it in *de quantitate animae*: 'The highest and true God, through the inviolable and incorruptible law, by which he governs everything that he has made, subjects the body to the soul, the soul to himself and thus everything to himself, and he does not leave her in any act, either through punishment, or through reward.'[27] God the Creator rules the soul as a just ruler by rewarding its merits and punishing its sins.

Excursus: the embodiment of the soul

There is discussion about Augustine's early view of the embodiment of the soul before the fall. Especially *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* is an object of

[20] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,10 (on the Word); *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,16 (on Christ the Power and Wisdom of God as the head of the mind).

[21] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,10. [22] *lib. arb.* 1,15.

[23] In *lib. arb.* 1,30 Augustine distinguishes between the desire to be happy and the will by which we merit happiness. All desire happiness, but not all deserve it, because they do not seek it in obedience to the divine law. This disobedience results in unhappiness which is simultaneously voluntary (because chosen by man) and involuntary (as man intended to attain happiness).

[24] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,10. [25] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,12; *uera rel.* 38.

[26] Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 254; Bouton-Touboulic, *L'Ordre caché*, 336.

[27] *an. quant.* 80, CSEL 89,229: '*Deus igitur summus et uerus lege inuiolabili et incorrupta, qua omne quod condidit regit, subicit animae corpus, animam sibi et sic omnia sibi neque in ullo actu eam deserit siue poena siue praemio*.'

this debate. Robert O'Connell has argued that Augustine, in this early work, sees the pre-lapsarian human being as a spiritual and not-yet individualized entity, comparable to the Plotinian Worldsoul, from which all individual and embodied souls have their origin and to which they should return. According to his reading of *Gn. adu. Man*., before the fall there is only one soulish entity, which becomes individualized and wrapped up in a mortal body when it leaves the contemplation of God and starts to concentrate on the material world.[28] O'Connell further contends that Augustine does not regard Adam and Eve in *Gn. adu. Man* as historical individuals, but respectively as a higher and a lower principle of the undivided worldsoul (*creatura inuisibilis*).

The major difficulty of this interpretation is that O'Connell conflates the storyline of the soul as *creatura inuisibilis*, which becomes 'man laboring on the earth', with another storyline that says that God created man as a composite of an animal body and soul. At this point I side with Rombs, who has pointed out that the former image of pre-lapsarian humanity suggests that embodiment and individuation are the result of the fall, whereas the latter image suggests that individuated and embodied existence come from God.[29] These storylines should not be conflated.[30] Even in his allegorical exegesis, where Augustine treats Adam and Eve as two parts of the human soul, he presupposes that they are historical figures. Compare the sentence: '*Quapropter etsi uisibilis femina secundum historiam de corpore viri primo facta est a Domino Deo, non utique sine causa ita facta est, nisi ut aliquod secretum intimaret*' (*Gn. adu. Man*. 2,17). O'Connell regards the word 'etsi' as a 'concessum non datum' with regard to the historicity of Eve's creation, but it could also be interpreted as saying that Eve's creation is historical, but not without allegorical meaning. This is confirmed by *Gn. adu. Man*. 1,30 where Augustine says of Adam and Eve: 'They were not yet children of this age before they had sinned.'

O'Connell also supports his thesis by appealing to the fact that Augustine identifies the first man with the *creatura inuisibilis*. This identification does not necessarily contradict the idea of an individuated and embodied existence, however. Augustine says that the soul (*anima*) belonged to the *inuisibilis creatura* and was inwardly nourished by the divine wisdom. Through sin man came to labour upon the earth and needed outward signs in order to know God. In other texts Augstine uses *creatura inuisibilis* once to refer to the world-soul (*Gn. litt. imp*. 7,14), but in other passages the word refers to the angels (*Gn. litt. imp*. 3,9; *Simpl.* 2,1,5). Hence, I suggest that Augustine conceives of the pre-lapsarian soul as sharing the angelic contemplation. As such

[28] R. O'Connell, 'De Genesi contra Manichaeos and the Origin of the Soul', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 39 (1993), 129–41 (esp. 133–6).

[29] Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul*, 119–30.

[30] Daniel Austin Napier, *En Route to the Confessions: The Roots and Development of Augustine's Philosophical Anthropology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 39–45.

the soul belonged to the *creatura inuisibilis*, the heavenly world, but it is possible that it already lived an individuated and embodied life on the earth. An argument for this interpretation can be derived from 2,6 where the pre-lapsarian soul says to God: *spes mea est tu, portio mea in terra uiuentium*. In 2,30 *terra* is equated with *corpus corruptibilis*. This suggests that also before the fall the soul already lived in a body (*in terra*), but it was not yet labouring upon the earth (in the corrupted body). This only began when the human soul left the inner contemplation of God in order to rule the body autonomously. This interpretation of the *creatura inuisibilis* is broadly confirmed by A. Parvan.[31] Parvan also considers the pre-lapsarian human being as individually embodied, although this embodiment is highly spiritual. The fall's effect is not embodiment itself, but the body becoming mortal and opaque (84–6).[32]

The Fall

In the state of paradise, the mind and the body were in complete harmony. The mind did not yet have to labour in order to subject the desires of the flesh to reason. As long as man remained in the contemplation of God, his mind and body functioned in perfect harmony, the one ruling and the other complying. However, through the suggestion of the devil, man fell away from God by pride (*superbia*).[33] As already discussed, pride means that the human soul is no longer content with its middle state in the order of creation, namely under God and above the body. It begins to imagine itself as autonomous and self-sufficient, just like God who is free from all dominion and Lord over everything.[34] Man is displeased with what he is: a nature that cannot be happy when left to its own powers.[35] Man's discontent with his creaturely position

[31] A. Parvan, 'Genesis 1–3: Augustine and Origen on the Coats of Skins', *Vigiliae Christianae* 66/1 (2012), 56–92.

[32] Parvan, 'Genesis 1–3', 84–6.

[33] *Gn. adu. Man.* is the first treatise in which Augustine extensively reflects upon pride (*superbia*) as the root of sin. The key passage from Eccl. 10:6: '*Initium omnis peccati superbia est*', occurs here for the first time. For the biblical meaning and Augustine's use of it, see J. F. Procopé, 'Initium omnis peccati superbia', in *Studia Patristica* 22, edited by Elizabeth E. Livingstone (Peeters: Leuven 1989), 315–20 (319). This concept has a Neoplatonic background. In Neoplatonic cosmogony, the soul is said to fall because of its *tolma* (pride), its desire to possess itself separately from the One. Cf. N. J. Torchia, *Plotinian 'Tolma' and the Fall of the Soul in the Early Philosophy of Augustine* (Doctoral Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1987). Augustine uses this concept in a Christian context, presupposing the distinction between man's creation and his fall (which in Plotinus are inseparably connected).

[34] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,25, CSEL 91,143: '*. . . sic homo peccauit, cum uult esse par Deo, id est liber esse ab eius dominio sicut ille ab omni dominio liber est, quia ipse est Dominus omnium.*'

[35] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,22, CSEL 91,144: '*Non enim accepit hominis natura, ut per suam potestatem Deo non regente beata sit, quia nullo regente per suam potestatem beatus esse solus Deus potest.*'

leads to his disobedience to the eternal law. He leaves 'the inner room of conscience' where this law is present. He no longer obeys the order of creation. He turns his *intentio* from contemplation of God to action in the body.[36]

Through action in the body man wants to attain and posses the beatitude that only God possesses in himself. In his pride man wants to prove that he can acquire this beatitude by his own actions, rather than by receiving it from God. Augustine defines this sinful striving of fallen man as *diligere quod in mundo est*, through *concupiscentia carnis*, *concupiscentia oculorum/curiositas*, and *ambitio mundi* (after 1 John 2:15–16).[37] In this triple concupiscence man tries to be like God. *Concupiscentia oculorum/curiositas* is aimed at gaining infallible knowledge; *ambitio* aims at gaining power over the external world (including other humans[38]), which consists in ease of action; *concupiscentia carnis/voluptas corporis* aims at having ultimate rest (*quies*), without lack or loss.[39] Man's desire for created goods is thus ultimately aimed at acquiring a godlike self-sufficiency and rule.[40] As we will see, however, the very movement of the soul by which man strives after autonomous dominion produces slavery and suffering.

Upon Adam's transgression, God punishes Adam for his disobedience. He becomes conformed to the things he loves. He becomes a 'son of this age' (*filius*

[36] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,24. See Napier, *En Route*, 45f.

[37] *uera rel.* 4; 70; 107; *mus.* 6,44.

[38] *mus.* 6, 41, PL 32,1185: '*Iste autem animae appetitus est sub se habere alias animas non pecorum, quas diuino iure concessum est, sed rationales, id est, proximas suas, et sub eadem lege socias atque consortes.*'

[39] *uera rel.* 101, CCL 32,253: '*Quid enim appetit curiositas nisi cognitionem, quae certa esse non potest, nisi rerum aeternarum et eodem modo se semper habentium? Quid appetit superbia nisi potentiam, quae refertur ad agendi facilitatem, quam non invenit anima perfecta nisi Deo subdita, et ad eius regnum summa caritate conversa? Quid appetit voluptas corporis nisi quietem, quae non est nisi ubi nulla est indigentia et nulla corruptio?*' Cf. Isabelle Bochet, 'Animae Medicina: la libération de la triple convoitise selon le De vera religione', in *Il mistero del male e libertà possibile IV: Ripensare Agostino*, 143–76.

[40] Pride and cupidity are interrelated. In *mor.* 1,35, CSEL 90,40 Augustine argues that Adam transgressed the law through *cupiditas*, referring to 1 Tim. 6:10: '*Radix est omnium malorum cupiditas*', whereas in *Gn. adu. Man.* he characterizes the root of Adam's sin as *superbia* (*initium omnis peccati superbia*). These causes of sin are connected. Man wants to have absolute beatitude, which only God possesses (*superbia*) and desires to attain this ideal by making himself dependent upon the things that are below him (*cupiditas*). Thus, man leaves his middle place (*medietas*) under God and above the body. Cf. *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,26, CSEL 91,148: '*Dicitur ergo huic: pectore et uentre repes [Gn. 3,14]. Quod quidem in colubro animaduertitur, et ex illo animante uisibili ad hunc inuisibilem inimicum nostrum locutio figuratur. Nomine enim pectoris significatur superbia, quia ibi dominatur impetus animae, nomine autem uentris significatur carnale desiderium, quia haec pars mollior sentitur in corpore. Et quia his rebus ille serpit ad eos quos uult decipere, propterea dictum est: pectore et uentre repes [Gn. 3,14].*' The devil deceives man through *superbia* and *carnale desiderium*. See also *lib. arb.* 3,48 where Augustine characterizes *cupiditas/auaritia* (again with reference to 1 Tim. 6:10) as desiring more than what is enough to preserve a nature in its own kind. Similarly, *superbia* is that desire by which we aspire to be more than we are. Cf. B. Bruning, 'Augustinus over hoogmoed en hebzucht versus genade', in *Augustiniana Neerlandica: Aspecten van Augustinus' spiritualiteit en haar doorwerking*, edited by Paul van Geest and Johannes van Oort (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 309–22 (esp. 316–18).

saeculi huius), dominated by the change and restlessness proper to temporal creation.[41] Being created out of nothing, Adam had been elevated above the temporal creation through the illumination of the Spirit and the Word. As long as he inwardly contemplated God, neither his mind nor his body suffered from time and change, but ruled over temporal creation, enjoying stability and rest. Through pride and cupidity, he lost this state of grace.[42]

Both soul and body are affected by this fall.[43] The soul lost its stability and rest, as it started seeking absolute being and truth in the sphere of lower, changeable goods. As a result of the soul's diversion from God, the body started to leave the soul. It became mortal.[44] Instead of obeying the soul's commands, it began to oppose the soul. And what is more, the entire temporal creation started making man suffer, as he constantly experiences that it cannot be to him what he desires it to be.[45] This is the logic of the punishment of sin: if man aspires to have absolute dominion over himself and the surrounding world, he receives the opposite of his strivings. He becomes enslaved to the things over which he was supposed to rule.[46]

Creation's Rebellion against Man: God's Gracious Judgement

Having described Augustine's understanding of mans's creation and fall, we now turn to the punishment of the first sin and its pedagogical function.

God expresses his just response to human sin by subjecting him to the rebellion of man's own body and of the rest of corporeal creation. In a pre-lapsarian state, the soul mediated life to the body and the body obeyed the soul, as long as the soul obeyed God. But when the soul rebelled against God by turning towards itself, the body began to rebel against the soul by becoming mortal. The body no longer subjects itself to the soul's desires, but oppresses it through its vulnerability.[47] The soul wants to enjoy sensible creation through the body, but because the body has become mortal, it cannot but fail to fulfil the desires of the soul. Furthermore, sensible creation itself 'punishes' man for his improper love of it. When he experiences its failure to be what he wants it to be, he in fact suffers God's judgement on his evil will. By simply governing material creation according to the laws of time and change, God punishes the

[41] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,30, CSEL 91,98; *uera rel.* 38. [42] *uera rel.* 38. [43] *mus.* 6,6; 13.
[44] *uera rel.* 23–4; 83. [45] Rief, *Ordobegriff*, 254.
[46] *mor.* 1,39–40. Augustine uses Eccl. 1,2 *uanitas uanitantium* (*mor. eccl.* 1,22; *uera rel.*41; *an. quant.* 76) to express the idea that man becomes empty (*uana*), both in mind (foolishness) and body (mortality) by treating creation as if it is the Creator. For the theme of *uanitas* in Augustine, see L. Chevallier and H. Rondet, 'L'Idée de la vanité dans l'œuvre de St. Augustin', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 3/3 (1957), 222–34.
[47] *mus.* 6,6; 13. Cf. Zum Brunn, *Being and Nothingness*, 55–6.

soul that loves creation in an evil way. In this situation, man experiences his subjection to the divine law. We already encountered this idea in the Cassiciacum Dialogues, and it recurs in Augustine's Thagastan writings.[48]

According to Augustine, these divine judgements stand in an eternal perspective. Man's suffering in this life is not absolute and final. Although man became mortal through sin, he still enjoys something of God's truth and beauty in his enjoyment of food and drinks, knowledge, health, and ease of action. But when he must leave the body, the soul receives that for which it principally opted by sin: nothingness, the total absence of the truth and beauty for which the soul has been made. This is the final judgement of those who do not live according to the law that God established for man. Hence, the suffering of this life is intended as a sign pointing to the eternal and final suffering that awaits in hell, 'where there is no memory of God . . . where no one will praise him.'[49] It announces the final judgement. As such, suffering in this life is not merely retributive, but also corrective. It is an expression of God's will to grant humanity the opportunity of salvation. Augustine expresses this idea as follows in *De uera religione* 15,29:

> That the human body, while before sin it was the best of its kind, has become feeble after sin and destined to die is indeed a just punishment for sin; all the same it is a greater manifestation of the Lord's clemency than of his severity. This, you see, is the way to convince us how right it is to turn our love away from the pleasures of the body to the eternal reality of Truth. And the beauty of justice proves to be in harmony with the grace of benevolence when, after we have been deceived by the sweetness of lesser goods, we are taught a lesson by the bitterness of the penalties. In this way, you see, divine providence has so tempered our penalties that we are allowed to tend towards justice even in this perishable body and also, putting down our load of pride, to submit our necks to the one true God, to put no confidence in ourselves, and to commit the task of ruling and directing our lives to him alone.[50]

[48] *mus.* 6,30, PL 82,1180: '*Ita peccantem hominem ordinauit deus turpem, non turpiter. turpis enim factus est uoluntate, uniuersum amittendo quod dei praeceptis obtemperans possidebat, et ordinatus in parte est, ut qui legem agere noluit, a lege agatur.*' Augustine also uses the image of the *carmen saeculorum.* He depicts creation in its temporality as a song uttered by God. Man was created to contemplate the art of the poem, instead of being obsessed with its syllables. As he preferred the syllables to the unity of the whole and the divine art expressed therein, he has become part of the poem of the ages, seeking constancy in it, but never finding it. See *mus.* 6,14, 44; *uera rel.* 42–43; *diu. qu.* 29; *lib. arb.* 3,42.

[49] Cf. *uera rel.* 101, CCL 32,253: '*Cauendi sunt ergo inferiores inferi, id est post hanc uitam poenae grauiores, ubi nulla potest esse commemoratio ueritatis . . . Quare festinemus, et ambulemus cum dies praesto est, ne nos tenebrae comprehendant. Festinemus a secunda morte liberari, ubi nemo est qui memor Dei sit, et ab inferno, ubi nemo confitebitur Deo.*' Cf. also *uera rel.* 51 for Augustine's belief in hell and the final judgement.

[50] *uera rel.* 29, CCL 32,205: '*Quod uero corpus hominis cum ante peccatum esset in suo genere optimum, post peccatum factum est imbecillosum et morti destinatum, quamquam iusta uindicta peccati sit, plus tamen clementiae Domini quam seueritatis ostendit. Ita enim nobis suadetur a corporis uoluptatibus ad aeternam essentiam ueritatis amorem nostrum oportere conuerti. Et est*

The penalty that follows upon the first sin turns out to be an expression of God's love towards us. The penalty of sin is tempered by grace, in that God grants man the opportunity to be educated by his sufferings and regain justice in the midst of suffering. Through the 'rebellion' of creation against man, he is granted the opportunity to lay off his own rebellion against God and to subject himself again to the divine rule.[51] This interpretation of corporeal 'oppression' as a corrective punishment of the human will is well attested in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, where Augustine describes man's exclusion from paradise.

Commenting on the verse 'God sent (*dimisit*) him [Adam] away from Paradise' (Gen. 3:22–3) Augustine argues that man's exclusion from paradise—corporeal death—can be compared to the 'exclusion' of a bad person from a group of good people. When he starts to live among good people and does not change his habits, he is driven out from the group by the weight of his own habit (*ex illa bona congregatione pondere malae suae consuetudinis pellitur*). If they shut him out they do not exclude him against his will, but according to his will. The exclusion is the affirmation of an already existing desire not to live in communion with this group of people. In the same way, mortality can be regarded as God's affirmation of the human desire not to live in obedient communion with him. As such, this punishment has a pedagogical function. It is intended as an external sign that confronts man with an invisible reality: his broken relationship with God. Just as excommunication explicates the broken relationship between the sinner and the community, man's exclusion from paradise explicates the broken relationship with God. This external measure is meant to correct the sinner and to enable him to reflect upon his behaviour, to convert and to be rehabilitated.[52]

In his commentary on Genesis, Augustine gives several examples of how God addresses the human will through the external discipline of bodily

iustitiae pulchritudo cum benignitatis gratia concordans, ut, quoniam bonorum inferiorum dulcedine decepti sumus, amaritudine poenarum erudiamur. Nam ita etiam nostra supplicia diuina prouidentia moderata est, ut et in hoc corpore tam corruptibili ad iustitiam tendere liceret et deposita omni superbia uni Deo uero collum subdere, nihil de se ipso fidere, illi uni se regendum tuendumque committere' (translation: WSA 1/8, 47). For a similar observation, see Couenhoven, *Stricken by Sin*, 41: 'At this point, Augustine's conceptions of punishment and grace begin to blur together. . . . Our fractured selves and weakened bodies and minds make it difficult to accomplish all we might wish, but since what we wish is not altogether pure, this limitation is actually a blessing in disguise.'

[51] Girard, *La Mort chez Augustin*, 47: 'La Désobéissance des choses rappelle à l'homme qu'il a à obéir à Dieu.'

[52] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,34, CSEL 91,157: '*Potest ergo uideri propterea homo in labores huius uitae esse dimissus, ut aliquando manum porrigat ad arborem uitae et uiuat in aeternum.*' Augustine interprets this punishment as a prophecy of the cross of Christ. Through Christ's suffering man would again stretch out his hand to the tree of life. When he compares the exclusion of man to ecclesiastical discipline, Augustine refers to 2 Tim. 2:25.

oppression. When Augustine discusses the sentence of Eve, he argues that the pain of childbirth is a great sign (*magnum sacramentum*) by which God teaches us a spiritual lesson. It reminds us of the suffering of the female part of the soul in producing virtue.[53] Just as women experience severe bodily pain in order to give birth to a child, the lower part of the soul has to suffer the pain of abstaining from its carnal desires in order to give birth to a good habit.[54] In other words, a woman suffering from childbirth teaches us the divine commandment to put to death our bad habits. As Augustine puts it: 'What seem to be curses here are in fact commandments, if we take care not to read what is spiritual in a carnal manner; for the law, you see, is spiritual.'[55] This text clearly reveals that Augustine conceives of the mortal body as a sign or sacrament through which the divine law addresses us. Augustine's message is that through the outward sign of the body God admonishes our souls to return by changing our bad habits.

A second example of Augustine's sacramental interpretation of creation's rebellion against man is his allegorical exegesis of the curse that God laid upon Adam. Adam was sentenced to labour upon the earth, which would yield 'thorns and thistles', so that he had to win his bread in the sweat of his brow. On the one hand, Augustine interprets this sentence literally. After sin the earth produces dangerous and poisonous plants and pests that make agricultural work difficult.[56] But it also has a deeper meaning. Augustine writes:

> What should be said is that it was through man's sin that the earth was cursed, so as to bring forth thorns, not so that the earth itself should feel the punishment, since it lacks sensation, but that it might always be setting the criminal nature of human sin before people's very eyes, and thus admonishing them to turn away at some time or other from their sins and turn back to God's commandments.[57]

The literal thorns and thistles that impede man's mastery of the earth are in fact divine admonitions to him to return to his own soul and excise the

[53] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,29, CSEL 91,150: '*Et quod in doloribus pariat filios, quamuis et in ista uisibili muliere compleatur, tamen ad illam secretiorem consideratio reuocanda est.*'

[54] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,29, CSEL 91,150–1: '*. . . nulla abstinentia fit a uoluptate carnali, quae non habeat in exordio dolorem, donec in meliorem partem consuetudo flectatur . . . quae consuetudo ut nasceretur, cum dolore reluctatum est consuetudini malae.*'

[55] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,29, CSEL 91,151: '*Ista ergo, quae maledicta uidentur, praecepta sunt, si non carnaliter spiritalia legamus. Lex enim spiritalis est [Rom. 7:14]*' (translation: WSA 1/13, 91).

[56] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,19 CSEL 91,85: '*Herbae autem uenenosae ad poenam uel ad exercitationem mortalium creatae sunt, et hoc totum propter peccatum, quia mortales post peccatum facti sumus.*'

[57] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,19, CSEL 91,85: '*Ergo dicendum est, quod per peccatum hominis terra maledicta sit, ut spinas pareret, non ut ipsa poenas sentiret, quae sine sensu est, sed ut peccati humani crimen semper hominibus ante oculos poneret, quo admonerentur aliquando auerti a peccatis et ad Dei praecepta conuerti*' (translation: WSA 1/13, 51).

tares that suffocate the Word of God.[58] In the same way Augustine explains the existence of unfruitful trees and wild animals (which the Manichees considered a good proof of the evil nature of the creator). Augustine compares the unfruitfulness of trees to the spiritual unfruitfulness of man. The sterility of trees admonishes us to turn inward and to face our own spiritual sterility. Furthermore, these trees should make us fear that God will leave us unto decay, just as we ourselves abandon unfruitful trees and cease to cultivate them.[59] On the harmfulness of wild animals to man Augustine says the same things. Their harmfulness exhorts him not to seek happiness in the life of the flesh, but to devote himself to God and to the life to come.[60]

To summarize, corporeal creation after sin functions as a *sign* of the divine law that compels man to face his soul's antipathy toward God. Whereas fallen man seeks his beatitude in the enjoyment of temporal creation, this creation itself coerces him to admit that he acts against God's law.[61] Through it God addresses us as our judge and calls us to repentance. Augustine points out that those who receive the gift of love will respond to this divine call with repentance. He finds Manichaeism such a dreadful heresy because its dualism fosters the hardening of the heart against this divine call.

[58] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,30.

[59] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,19, CSEL 91,85: '*Per infructuosas vero arbores insultatur hominibus, ut intellegant quam sit erubescendum sine fructu bonorum operum esse in agro Dei, hoc est in Ecclesia; et timeant ne deserat eos Deus, quia et ipsi in agris suis infructuosas arbores deserunt, nec aliquam culturam eis adhibent.*'

[60] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,26, CSEL 91,93: '*De perniciosis [bestiis] autem uel punimur uel exercemur uel terremur, ut non istam uitam multis periculis et laboribus subditam, sed aliam meliorem ubi summa est securitas diligamus et desideremus et eam nobis pietatis meritis comparemus*.' For more information about Augustine's view of animals, see Wanda Cizewski, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Animals according to Augustine's Genesis Commentary', in *Augustine. Presbyter Factus Sum*, edited by Joseph T. Lienhard et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 363–74.

[61] Augustine persistently denies that non-rational creation shares in the punishment of human sin. Non-rational creation does not suffer punishment, but makes humanity suffer, because of human sin. Cf. Thomas E. Clarke SJ, 'Augustine and Cosmic Redemption', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1956), 133–64. Thus Augustine opposes the Manichaean idea of the evil character of creation. Our suffering tells us something about how we have distorted the *conuenientia* between us and our environment through sin (*mor.* 2,14–17). The incongruent relationship between us and the rest of bodily creation signifies the incongruent relation between us and the divine law.

Karla Pollman has shown that this Augustinian idea implies a reversal of the view of the relation between man and his environment in Greek and Roman religion. According to these classical traditions, man's environment has become imperfect or was made imperfect and man has to master this imperfection in order to give himself a good life. Augustine increasingly stresses that man's environment is good in its own right, but has become harmful for man because of a change in man himself (mortality through sin). Therefore, with regard to his salvation man should not focus on manipulating his environment, but on conversion of the soul. See Karla Pollmann, 'Human Sin and Natural Environment: Augustine's Two Positions on Genesis 3:18', *Augustinian Studies* 41/1 (2010), 69–85.

The Consequences of Adam's Sin for Human Willing

To what extent does man still posses the freedom to respond with obedience to the divine admonition that comes to him in his suffering? To what extent has Adam's fall into sin compromised our ability to know and to will the good? This is a much discussed question in Augustine scholarship, and it is also important for the present study, as the answer to this question helps us to see to what extent Augustine still thinks within the synergistic-pedagogical framework that he inherited from the anti-Gnostic tradition of Clement and Origen.

Athanase Sage has argued that Augustine's thought on this subject underwent a development consisting of three periods. From 387 to 396 Augustine would have espoused the traditional Christian idea that we inherit from Adam a mortal body, which burdens the soul, but not an inherent tendency to sin. Sin remains a free choice of the will that can be avoided. From 397 Augustine would have begun to defend the view that we not only inherit Adam's penalty in our body, but also in our souls, consisting of concupiscence. Only from 411 does Augustine start to defend the idea that every person is guilty of the original sin (the sin of Adam) from his birth and therefore liable to condemnation, merely on the basis of his contraction of this sin. This is why Augustine came to defend the necessity of infant baptism for salvation against the Pelagians.[62] Julius Gross has argued that before 391 Augustine was inclined to the idea that the soul suffered difficulty in this world because of a fall from pre-existent beatitude, which theory was transformed from 391 into the idea of 'Erbübel', the effects of Adam's fall under which his descendants suffer, such as death, ignorance, and weakness of will.[63] Although children suffer from the same effects, they are not counted as guilty by nature. If they die, they do not suffer punishment for any guilt, nor do they receive beatitude on the basis of merit. Having come to the age of reason, man is perfectly capable of willing the good with God's help. He only becomes guilty and deserves punishment, if he refuses to use his free will.[64] According to Gross, only from 396 does Augustine develop the idea that the sin of Adam is a sin of our nature ('Natursünde'), which makes us liable to eternal damnation, incapable of having merit of our own.[65]

Nello Cipriani has argued for a completely opposite position. According to him, the early Augustine regards us as responsible for Adam's sin, which was punished with both spiritual and corporeal death. Augustine only went from a more traducianist understanding of the relationship between Adam and his

[62] A. Sage, 'Le Péché originel: naissance d'un dogme', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 13 (1967), 211–48; Cf. Karfikova, *Grace and Free Will according to Augustine*, 63ff.

[63] Julius Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbsündendogmas* (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1960), 259–69.

[64] Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte*, 269.

[65] Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte*, 271.

offspring to a position which leaves room for other theories about the way in which the sin of Adam is transferred to his descendants.[66] Cipriani argued that Augustine's problem in understanding infant baptism has not so much to do with his initial hesitance with regard to original guilt, but with the problem of how this outward sacrament affects infants inwardly, as it is their soul that primarily needs to be reconciled to God.[67] Augustine's statement in *De libero arbitrio* 3,66 that infants who die unbaptized will receive an intermediate state between punishment and reward should be explained from its polemical context. As Augustine himself explains in his *Retractationes*, this was an apologetic argument against the Manichees, who do not believe in original sin.[68] Carol Harrison, although not directly engaging with Cipriani's article in her book *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, also strongly argues against Sage that the early Augustine considers us responsible for Adam's sin and implicated in its penal consequences with regard to body, mind, and will.[69] She argues that Augustine's theology of sin is primarily based upon his theology of *creatio ex nihilo*, according to which man has the inherent tendency to fall away from God towards nothingness. This tendency was unleashed by Adam's free choice to leave God; his offspring suffers from its devastating effects in ignorance, difficulty, and death. Harrison further argues that Augustine only once put this idea between brackets, against the Manichees in *De libero arbitrio* 3 (considering that ignorance and difficulty belong to our created nature), but even then emphasized that man does not possess the inherent abilities to know and perform the good, but only to ask for help.[70]

Another aspect of the discussion on the relationship between Adam and his descendants concerns the idea of 'involuntary sin', introduced by Malcolm Alflatt. He has argued that Augustine starts with the view that sin is a voluntary and avoidable choice of the will, which only becomes necessary through repetitive evil choices. According to Alflatt, this view is particularly attested in the first book of *De libero arbitrio*. Augustine would only gradually have developed the idea of 'involuntary sin', which then occurs for the first time in *De fide et symbolo* 10,21 and *De libero arbitrio* 3,51.[71] According to this idea,

[66] Cipriani, 'La dottrina del peccato originale', 24–48.
[67] Cipriani, 'La dottrina del peccato originale', 31.
[68] Cipiriani, 'La dottrina del peccato originale', 47–8.
[69] Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 167–97.
[70] Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 199–226.
[71] See M. Alflatt, 'The Development of the Idea of Involuntary Sin in St. Augustine', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 20 (1974), 114–34. In his article '"Involuntary Sin" in *de libero arbitrio*', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 37 (1991), 23–36, Robert O'Connell criticized the idea of 'involuntary sin', arguing that Augustine does not so much extend his definition of sin to involuntary evildoings, but rather contends that if we apply the term *peccatum* to involuntary sinful actions, this use needs justification, as *peccatum* normally refers to a free act of the human will. He does so by appealing to humanity's solidarity with Adam and Eve when they sinned. Our involuntary evildoings are both sins and the punishment for the voluntary sin that we committed

our will is fettered to a necessity to develop carnal habit, because we suffer from the punishment of the first sin, which consists of ignorance and difficulty. What was voluntary in Adam has become our nature. Although Babcock has pointed out that Augustine already developed a synthesis between voluntary sin and compulsion in *De duabus animabus*,[72] several scholars defend the view that the change in Augustine's understanding of sin was particularly caused by the later debate with the Manichaean priest Fortunatus, who challenged Augustine with the question of how his view on sin as voluntary related to Pauline passages such as Rom. 7:23; 8:7 and Gal. 5:17, which suggest that we do evil against our will (and hence seem to favour Manichaean dualism).[73] These passages would have caused Augustine to rethink his earlier position. This eventually resulted in the idea that we sin by necessity, but that this necessity is rooted in a voluntary choice, namely the sin of Adam for which we are somehow responsible. By thus limiting the freedom of the will to the first agent, and declaring us identical with that agent, Augustine was able to combine his anti-Manichaean argument that sin is by nature voluntary with the idea that we cannot avoid developing sinful habits, because our free will suffers from ignorance and difficulty.

The following section addresses the question as to how Augustine in his works until 391 conceives of the relationship between Adam and his descendants and what the consequences of his sin are for their present condition. As *De libero arbitrio* 1 often features as providing arguments for Augustine's optimistic anthropology, I will first review other passages, and then come back to *De libero arbitrio* 1.

The fall and its consequences

In the Cassiciacum Dialogues, Augustine had already mentioned the fallen condition of the soul and its bondage to mortal things, but remained in doubt about the metaphysical cause of this situation.

in them. Only thus, if the evildoer and the bearer of punishment are the same, is Augustine's account of fallen agency saved from Manichaean necessitarianism. In his article O'Connell forgot to pay attention to Alflatt's own elaboration of this idea in Malcolm Alflatt, 'The Responsibility for Involuntary Sin in Saint Augustine', *Recherches augustiniennes* 19 (1975), 171–86. See for a helpful summary of the debate Wu TianYue, 'Augustine on Involuntary Sin: A Philosophical Defense', *Augustiniana* 55/1–2 (2009), 45–78 (45–53).

[72] William Babcock, 'Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency', in *The Ethics of St. Augustine*, edited by William Babcock (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1991), 89–113 (98). For the role of *De duabus animabus* in the development of Augustine's concept of 'involuntary sin', see also James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of the Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90–8.

[73] For this explanation, see Alflatt, 'Development', 124ff.; Paula Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul*, 88–105; Jason David BeDuhn, 'Did Augustine Win his Debate with Fortunatus?' in '*In Search of Truth*'. *Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism*, 463–79 (esp. 475–6).

In *De animae quantitate* Augustine provides the reader with a first explicit reflection on this point. In section 81 he writes: 'Who would think of inquiring how the soul is formed in this corruptible and frail body, when he considers that the soul itself has also (i.e. just like the body) been justly thrust into death because of sin, and can excel through virtue even in the body.'[74] This passage reveals two things. First, that Augustine regards humanity as implicated in the sin of Adam. It was a sin of the soul through which the connection between soul and body has been disorganized. Second, Augustine regards this sin of the soul as affecting both the soul itself and the body. The soul is now united to a mortal body, because it was itself thrust into death because of its sin (*[anima] in mortem iure contrusa propter peccatum*). It received a body that fitted it. This passage thus implies that Augustine regards humanity as implicated in the guilt and consequences of Adam's sin for both soul and body. We necessarily enter this life as the old man, 'because of the neglect of God's law'.[75] This *uetustas* is the source for subsequent formation of compulsive habits in our lives.[76]

De moribus ecclesiae (388–9) and *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* (389) confirm the findings from *De animae quantitate.* Augustine regards all humanity as guilty of the sin that Adam committed in paradise: 'We have merited mortality by sinning.'[77] Furthermore, Augustine regards the consequences of that first sin as affecting both soul and body.

As a consequence of sin, the mortal body oppresses the mind. The mind has difficulty in finding the truth (*difficultas inueniendae ueritatis*), because 'the perishing body weighs down the soul and the earthly habitation presses down the mind that thinks many things' (Wisd. 9:15).[78] The mortal body

[74] *an. quant.* 81, CSEL 89,230: '*Quis… quaerendum putet, qualis [anima] in hoc mortali et fragili corpore efficiatur, cum et in mortem propter peccatum iure contrusa sit et uirtute hic etiam possit excellere.*'

[75] *an. quant.* 55, CSEL 90,201: '*[uetus homo]…a quo incipere propter neglectam dei legem certa est necessitas.*'

[76] *an. quant.* 71. The mind subjects itself to the animal soul, so that 'it attaches itself by habit to things among which the body acts and by which it sustains the body, and from these as if they were of its own constitution, it is reluctant to be separated; and this force of habit which is not terminated even by separation from the realities themselves and by the passing of time, is called memory' (Joseph Colleran, *The Greatness of the Soul, The Teacher* (Washington, DC: The Newman Press, 1950), 100).

[77] *mor.* 1,12, CSEL 90,14: '*… a legibus suis hominem lapsum et propter cupiditatem rerum mortalium iure ac merito mortalem sobolem propagantem*'; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,38, CSEL 91,164: '*… poenalem mortalitatem, quam peccando meruimus…*'; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,8, CSEL 91,128: '*… mortalitatem, quam damnatione meruimus…*'; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,32, CSEL 91,154: '*Nam illa mors, quam omnes qui ex Adam nati sumus, coepimus debere naturae…*'; *uera rel.* 51, CCL 32, p. 221: '*…peccato nostro, quod in homine peccatore ipsa natura nostra commisit…*' At this point, I would like to nuance Lamberigts's argument that Augustine's early anti-Manichaean writings lack an explicit mention of our guilt in Adam (M. Lamberigts, 'Peccatum originale', *A-L* vol. 4, 3/4: 'A. nowhere explicitly speaks of our guilt in Adam, suggesting that we are only involved in the punishment…'). Augustine does explicitly say that we or our nature sinned in Adam, which implies that we are guilty of our present penal condition.

[78] *Gn. Adu. Man.* 2,30, CSEL 91,152: '*Certe illud manifestum est, quod nemo auadat istam sententiam* (issued in Gn. 3:17-19). *Hoc ipsum enim, quod in hac uita quisque natur difficultatem*

burdens the mind with 'the pricks and scratches of tortuous, intractable problems, or else the anxious thoughts about providing for this life, which frequently choke the word and stop it bearing fruit in man.'[79] Moreover, the mind has difficulty to distinguish *phantasmata*—images that enter the mind through the senses—from the truth.[80] These passages suggest that both knowing the truth and the ease of maintaining the truth have become difficult for the mind because of the body's mortality.

One misinterprets Augustine, however, if one perceives the relationship between body and soul too dualistically, as if a pure soul dwells in a corrupt mortal body. In Augustine's eyes, the soul itself has an inner inclination to subject itself to the body. Although Augustine stresses that the soul *chooses* to let itself be ruled by the desires of its animal part, this does not imply that this is an avoidable process. On the contrary, passages in *De moribus* and *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* suggest that this is a necessary process. The formation of habit seems an inevitability, rooted in a covetousness that humanity inherits from Adam.

In *De moribus* Augustine states that Adam transgressed God's commandment by *cupiditas*, the desire to master the things below him. As a result of this sin, we all die in Adam (1 Cor. 15:22). This is not only a corporeal death, but also a spiritual one. Augustine says that we bear the old man by nature. He also quotes 1 Cor. 15:47–9 where Paul says that we bear the image of the earthly man Adam. This suggests that we not only inherit mortality, but also evil desires from Adam, which drag the soul into the formation of evil habits.[81] In *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* 2,10 Augustine builds a similar argument. He says that Adam lost the Spirit of God when he transgressed God's commandment. As a result Adam started to live according his animal part. Augustine then adds, 'we all who are born after [this] sin, act out the animal man until we

inueniendae ueritatis habet ex corruptibili corpore—sicut enim Salomon dicit: corpus quod corrumpitur aggrauat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem [Sap. 9,15].' Throughout his carreer Augustine keeps using Wisd. 9:15 to express the effects of the first sin on human nature. For an overview of the texts and a discussion of their content, see Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, *Biblia Augustiniana: le livre de la Sagesse* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1970), 205–27; 289–93.

[79] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,30, CSEL 91,152: '*…punctiones tortuosarum quaestionum aut cogitationes de prouisione huius uitae; quae plerumque, nisi exstirpentur et de agro dei proiciantur, suffocant uerbum, ne fructificet in homine*' (translation: WSA 1/13, 91).

[80] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,30.

[81] Sage, 'Péché originel', 215 argues that Augustine in this passage conceives of the relationship between Adam and his descendants as example and imitator respectively. The text itself suggests something else. The expression '*O alta mysteria*', which follows the quotation of 1 Cor. 15:22, suggests that Adam's *cupiditas* comes to us in another way than by mere imitation, for if our sinning were only a matter of imitation, it would be unlikely to speak of deep mysteries. Augustine also expresses the myserious nature of our solidarity with Adam in *mor.* 1,40: '*…antiquum peccatum quo nihil est ad praedicandum notius, nihil ad intelligendum secretius.*' Cf. Cipriani, 'La dottrina del peccato originale', 31–3.

gain the spiritual Adam, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who committed no sin.'[82] Just as in *De moribus* Augustine contrasts humanity born from Adam, living according to the desires of the lower soul (*pars animalis*), with humanity recreated in Christ, the second Adam, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:46). Slavery to cupidity seems to be inevitable, because of the fractured soul that we inherited from Adam.

Augustine's depiction of the fall and its punishment in *De vera religione* supports this spiritual aspect of the punishment of the first sin. In sections 21–3 Augustine describes the relationship between sin and death. If the soul turns away from God and wishes against God's law to enjoy bodies, it leaves 'being' and tends to nothingness (*uergit ad nihilim*). As long as the soul lives according to this orientation it is carnal (*carnalis*) and earthly (*terrena*); therefore it will not possess the kingdom of God and will even lose the object of its love.

From this general observation about the soul's sin and its punishment, Augustine suddenly turns to Adam. 'He neglected [God's] commands: "Eat this, don't eat that." Hence, he is dragged off to punishment, because by loving lower things he is assigned his place among the lowest, in the poverty of his pleasures and his pains.'[83] A few lines later Augustine circles back from speaking about Adam's penal state to the soul in general: 'If the soul, however, while engaged in the stadium of human life, beats those desires with which he has fed himself against himself . . . it will turn back from the many things that change to the one unchanging good.'[84] The structure of this argument suggests that Augustine regards our souls and Adam's soul as a unity. He first describes the consequences of sin for the soul in general, then turns to Adam and eventually turns back to the soul in general. Adam's soul and our soul are one. Through Adam's sin, our souls have become *carnalis et terrena*, unfit to posses the kingdom of God, and our bodies are destined to die.[85]

[82] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,10, CSEL 91,129–30: '*Animalem hominem prius agimus omnes, qui de illo post peccatum nati sumus, donec assequamur spiritalem Adam, id est dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui peccatum non fecit [1 Pt. 2,22]*.'

[83] *uera rel.* 23, CCL 32,201–02: '*Praecepta* [*enim*] *eius neglexit dicentis: hoc manduca et hoc noli. Trahitur ergo ad poenas, quia diligendo inferiora in egestate uoluptatum suarum et in doloribus apud inferos ordinatur*.'

[84] *uera rel.* 24, CCL 32,201–2: '*Si autem dum in hoc stadio uitae humanae anima degit, uincat eas, quas aduersum se nutriuit . . . a multis mutabilibus ad unum incommutabile reuertetur*.'

[85] This language, derived from 1 Cor. 15:50, shows the importance of 1 Cor. 15 for the early Augustine. The opposition between Adam in whom we all die (1 Cor. 15:22) and Christ in whom we are all raised to life is already present and will become more important in the course of Augustine's career. Augustine has become famous for his use of Rom. 5:12ff. to express original sin and its effects, but this text occurs rather late in his works. In *Ad Simplicianum*, for example, he uses 1 Cor. 15:22 to express that all have become *massa damnata* in Adam. Cf. S. Lyonnet, 'Augustin et Rom. 5,12 avant la controverse pélagienne', *Nouvelle Revue théologique* 89/8 (1967), 842–9.

In *De uera religione* 83–4 Augustine affirms this idea. In this passage he first mentions mortality as the consequence of Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit in paradise. Subsequently, he refers to the carnality of the soul that we draw from the first transgression of man. He says that as a result of our giving in to the words of the woman, we are now 'toiling away at the earth and are most shamefully being overcome by all the things that have been able to shake and disturb us.'[86] At the same time, Augustine stresses that man remains responsible for his deeds. Humanity itself aggravates the soul's fallenness by its own evil choices. Augustine argues, for instance, that neither our eyes, nor the things that present themselves to our eyes, lie to us about their nature. Only man himself lies about them when he judges them as if they are the highest goods. If these objects of his love are snatched away from him, man is still not healed from his desire for them, for he still loves his own wrong judgement, so that his greed for them remains. 'In this way the spirit is made restless and wretched, as it longs to lay hold of the things it is held by.'[87] Both of these passages suggest that Augustine sees man's implication in sin as a necessity rooted in Adam's fall. At the same time, he is voluntarily engaged in aggravating the carnality of his soul by his own sinful choices.

In *De musica* Augustine describes the relationship between choice and the formation of habit. According to what process does man become implicated in habit? Augustine observes that the soul has been created as the ruling principle of the body.[88] It is meant to give life and unity to the body and to govern it according to its knowledge of the truth. This also implies that the soul, in its original integrity, did not undergo any passions from the body. The body could not 'make' anything in the soul.[89] The first sin, however, changed this

[86] *uera rel.* 85, CCL 32,243: '*Et nos in terra laboramus et cum magno dedecore superamur ab omnibus, quae nos commouere ac perturbare potuerint*' (translation: WSA 1/8, 87).

[87] *uera rel.* 65, CCL 32,230: '*Ita fit inquietus et aerumnosus animus frustra tenere a quibus tenetur exoptans*' (translation: WSA 1/8, 73). In his discussion of *De vera religione,* Prendiville has argued that the *consuetudo corporum* is a result of man's inordinate attention to the body. In order to find God, man has to use his senses, but runs the risk of paying attention to them in a wrong way, interchanging the goodness of higher intelligible realities with the goodness of lower sensible things. Prendiville argues that this misdirection of the soul is primarily caused by erroneous thinking, rather than by rebellious willing. My interpretation of this passage suggests that the will is deeper involved in Augustine's understanding of the *consuetudo corporum* than Prendiville wants to be true. Moreover, the development of *consuetudo* is also connected to the effect of the first sin, not merely to our present erroneous thinking. Prendiville reserves this development for the 390s. See John G. Prendiville, 'The Development of the Idea of Habit in the Thought of Saint Augustine', *Traditio* 28 (1972), 29–99.

[88] *mus.* 6,9, PL 32,1167: '*Ego enim ab anima animari hoc non puto corpus nisi intentione facientis. Nec ab iso quidquam illam pati arbitror sed facere de illo et in illo tamquam subiecto diuinitus dominationi suae.*'

[89] *mus.* 6,7, PL 32,1166. However, Augustine adds the word *fortasse*, which indicates that he leaves room for the possibility that the soul in some sense did affect the body before the fall. But Augustine's general idea seems to be, as we already observed in our treatment of *Gn. adu. Man.*, that feelings before the fall were only informed by the mind's knowledge and love of intelligible reality. Miles argues that the early Augustine opted for an active theory of sensation (according to which the soul is only affected by the body if it gives itself to the body), because he wanted to

relationship between body and soul.[90] In her rule of the body, the soul now undergoes passions. Augustine describes this as follows: the things that come to the body or are brought into it are either in harmony with or in opposition to its health. When they are in opposition to it, the soul resists these influences, so that the body's integrity is preserved. In this action it experiences difficulty and when this difficulty does not pass unobserved, the soul is said to feel pain or labour.[91] If the external object that confronts the body agrees with it, the soul joins it to the body. If the soul pays attention to this, she experiences pleasure.[92] This action of the soul, through which it pays attention to the things that either oppose or agree with the integrity of the body, is called 'sensation'.[93] This continuous attention to the body implies for the soul that it becomes less, because it is less with itself.[94] Augustine describes this new kind of sensation as a consequence of the aversion of the soul from God. He writes: 'However, if the soul neglects the master and is focused on the servant, it feels, with a desire that is called carnal, its own motions which it gives over to the body and is less… But through this fault of its master the body is much less than it used to be, since the soul was more before the fault.'[95] As a consequence, 'the soul dominates the now mortal and frail body with great difficulty and attention. Because of this, it makes the mistake of valuing the pleasure of the body more highly—since matter gives way to its attention—than the health itself, which has no need for attention.'[96]

stress against the Manichees that the soul itself is responsible for its sufferings in the body. See Margaret Miles, *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 17.

[90] *mus.* 6,7, PL 32,1166: '*Mirare potius quod facere aliquid in anima corpus potest. Hoc enim fortasse non posset, si non peccato primo corpus illud quod nulla molestia et summa facilitate animabat et gubernabat, in deterius commutatum, et corruptioni subiaceret et morti.*' Cf. *mus.* 6, 13.

[91] *mus.* 6,9: '*Ideoque cum renititur aduersanti, et materiam sibi subiectam in operis sui uias difficulter impingit, fit attentior ex difficultate in actionem; quae difficultas propter attentionem, cum eam non latet, sentire dicitur, et hoc uocatur dolor aut labor.*'

[92] *mus.* 6,8–11.

[93] *mus.* 6,10. Augustine distinguishes between *sensus* and *sensation.* The *sensus* is the instrument of the body (*instrumentum corporis*) that is activated by the soul. Through *sensus* alterity is perceived and evaluated by the soul itself as either in agreement or in opposition to the body. This evaluation results in *sensation.*

[94] *mus.* 6,12: '*Cum autem ab eisdem suis operationibus aliquid patitur, a seipsa patitur, non a corpore; sed plane cum se accommodat corpori: et ideo apud seipsam minus est, quia corpus semper minus quam ipsa est.*'

[95] *mus.* 6, 13: '*Neglecto autem domino intenta in seruum carnali, quae dicitur, concupiscentia sentit motus suos, quos illi exhibet, et minus est… Hoc autem delicto dominae multo minus est quam erat, cum illa ante delictum magist esset. Quocirca mortali iam et fragili cum magna difficultate atque attentione dominatur. Hinc illi error incurrit, ut uoluptatem corporis, quia eius attentione cedit materies, pluris aestimet quam sanitatem ipsam, cui attentione nulla opus est*' (translation: Martin Jacobsson, *Aurelius Augustinus. De Musica liber VI: A Critical Edition with a Translation and an Introduction* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002), 35).

[96] *mus.* 6,13: '*Quocirca mortali iam et fragili cum magna difficultate atque attentione dominatur. Hinc illi error incurrit, ut uoluptatem corporis, quia eius attentione cedit materies, pluris aestimet quam sanitatem ipsam, cui attentione nulla opus est.*'

The post-lapsarian soul, already focused on the preservation of the body, becomes even more attached to it through the experience of bodily satisfaction, when the body yields to the soul's attention. According to Augustine, this experience exercises a lasting effect upon the soul. The soul voluntarily chooses to take delight in carnal pleasure (*voluptas*), but by doing so it decreases its freedom to abstain from this delight. Augustine writes: 'Although [the soul] starts those movements as it wishes, it does not stop them as he wishes. For, again, the reward of sin is not in his own power as sin itself is. For, indeed, this soul is a thing of great worth, and yet it doesn't remain apt to suppressing its own lascivious movements. For it sins in its strength and by divine law made weaker after sin it is less able to undo what it has done.'[97] Augustine explains this process of habit formation as follows: the *impetus* or *motus animi* by which the sin was freely perpetrated is stored up in memory and will present itself as the primary motivation to act upon if the soul finds itself in a similar situation. If the soul repetitively gives in to this carnal delight, it becomes increasingly fixed in the mind, so that the mind acquires a 'carnal way of thinking'. Augustine puts it as follows: 'Such a delight [of the soul given over to temporal things] strongly fixes in the memory what it brings from the slippery senses. And this habit of the soul made with flesh, through carnal affection, in the Holy Scriptures is called the flesh. And it is struggling with such a mind in that apostolic sentence: "In my mind I serve the law of God, but in flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25).'[98] If the mind then tries to return to God, it experiences the resistance of its own previously formed disposition. Augustine believes that when the mind concentrates again on spiritual realities, it is able to resist the impetus of *consuetudo* and even to extinguish its promptings.[99]

[97] *mus.* 6,14, PL 32,1170: '*Non enim sicut peccatum in eius potestate est, ita etiam poena peccati. Magna quippe res est ipsa anima, nec ad opprimendos lasciuos motus suos idonea sibi remanet. Valentior enim peccat, et post peccatum diuina lege facta imbecillior, minus potens est auferre quod fecit*' (translation: FC 2, 339). Augustine then quotes Rom. 7:24 as the cry of man under the dominion of *consuetudo*.

[98] *mus.* 6,33, PL 32,1181: '*Talis enim delectatio uehementer infigit memoriae quod trahit a lubricis sensibus. Haec autem animae consuetudo facta cum carne, propter carnalem affectionem, in scripturis diuinis caro nominatur. Haec menti obluctatur, cum iam dici potest apostolicum illud: mente seruio legi dei, carne autem legi peccati [Rom 7,25].*' (FC 2, 358). Cf. William S. Babcock, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans (A.D. 394–396)', *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979), 55–74 (58). Babcock regards this passage in *De musica* as the first instance where Augustine describes the inner struggle of the self against the self, which prevents a person from doing what he wants to do. This is true to the extent that Augustine connects Rom. 7:24–5 to this phenomenon. However, Augustine expresses the experience of this inner division already in the *Soliloquia*.

Isabelle Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'écriture: l'hermeneutique augustinienne* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004), 190–1 observes that Augustine does not yet divide Rom. 7:24 and 7:25 over the stages *sub lege* and *sub gratia*. The text still functions within a scheme of succesive progression in man's ascent from the sensible to the intelligible.

[99] *mus.* 6,33.

Augustine does not say, however, whether human free will plays any independent role in this process.

De libero arbitrio *1*

How then should we read *de libero arbitrio* 1? Augustine's depiction of the will in this book is often invoked as evidence for his optimistic early anthropology.[100] On this issue I side with scholars who have argued that book 1 should not be read in isolation, but in connection to the other two books with which it forms a unity.[101] If we read the first book as a part of this unified whole, what does Augustine then teach about the freedom of the human will?

De libero arbitrio starts with a question, posed by Augustine's dialogue partner Evodius: Is God the author of evil? Augustine responds that we should distinguish between evil as sin and evil as the punishment of sin. Man is the author of sin. God created him with a free will, but he made a wrong use of it. God is the author of the punishment of sin, the just reward of man's abuse of his free will. But if God created man with free will, is he not at least mediately the author of sin? Augustine denies this. Although God created man with free will, it is man himself who chose the possibility to make a wrong use of it. In order to substantiate this thesis, Augustine first addresses the question: 'What is doing evil' (*quid est malum facere*)? He arrives at the conclusion that evil consists in passion (*libido*) for the things that can be lost against one's will. This is disobedience to the eternal law, which commands us to love eternal goods and rule over the passions of the body. Subsequently, Augustine answers the question what the source of evil is, namely the free choice of the will. Neither something higher than the soul, nor something lower is able to compel it. 'Nothing makes the mind a companion of cupidity, except its own will and free choice (*propria uoluntas et liberum arbitrium*).' As God rules rational creatures according to the eternal law, he punishes them if they disobey this law.

In 1,22 Augustine describes the punishment that follows upon a misuse of this free will. He depicts this punishment as the situation in which the soul *presently* finds itself. 'Is it to be regarded as in itself not a small penalty that passion rules the soul, and draws it hither and thither, spoiled of its abundance

[100] Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 86–7; Babcock, 'Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency', 34–41; Paula Frederiksen, 'Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy in Augustine: Augustine on Paul against the Manichees and the Pelagians', *Recherches augustiniennes* 23 (1988), 87–114 (esp. 93).

[101] See Goulven Madec, *Petites Études augustiniennes* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1994), 121–35 (who opposes, among others, P. Séjourné, 'Les Conversions de saint Augustin d'après le *De libero arbitrio,* Livre I', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 25 (1951), 243–64; 333–63); S. Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17–62; C. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology,* 198–226.

of virtue, weak and needy … Can we think, in the end, that a condition like that is not penal, when we see that it must be undergone by all who do not cleave to wisdom?'[102] In response, Evodius poses two questions. First, why would someone who is wise opt for sin and become foolish (*causa peccati*)? Second, why do we who never were wise, suffer the punishment for sin that Augustine just described?[103] Augustine ignores the first question (which he will discuss in books 2 and 3), but responds to the second question, saying that we might have had an anterior life in which we were wise and sinned. Augustine touches here upon the problem of the origin of the soul. He deems this a very difficult question, which is to be discussed in its proper place.[104] Augustine will indeed do so in book 3 of *De libero arbitrio,* when he reviews the different theories on the origin of the soul, and elaborates the idea that we suffer the punishment for Adam's sin. At this point in the discussion, however, Augustine does not continue on this issue, probably because the main purpose of this book was to discuss the nature and cause of doing evil as such. Up to this point Augustine has observed what evil is, that its source is to be sought in the free choice of the will, that humans currently find themselves in a condition which is a punishment for the abuse of free will, and that this abuse did not take place in their proper lives on earth. Augustine thus clearly distinguishes between human free will in the state of creation from its present state in this life. Currently, the soul suffers the penal consequences of the first sin of Adam.

In the second part of the book, Augustine continues to explore the central problems of the preceding discussion, namely the nature of sin (misdirected willing) and its cause (free will). Now, however, he starts from the presupposition that our present state is natural, rather than the effect of a fall from wisdom.[105] Augustine undertakes this thought-experiment to defend God's justice against the Manichees, who deny a historical fall. His purpose is to argue that even if we never were wise, God punishes us justly for our sins. For God to be just in doing so, Augustine must uphold something of a free will

[102] *lib. arb.* 1,22, CSEL 74,23: '*Num ista ipsa poena parua existimanda est, quod ei libido dominatur expoliatamque uirtutis opulentia per diuersa inopem atque indigentem trahit … possumus ne tandem nullam istam poenam putare quam, ut cernis, omnes qui non inhaerent sapientiae necesse est perpeti?*'

[103] *lib. arb.* 1,23–4.

[104] *lib. arb.* 1,24. Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 60, has pointed out the cross-references between book 1 and book 3 on this issue. Augustine's argument that there is no cause of the soul's loss of wisdom (1,21) returns in 3,47–50. The punitive condition that resulted from the first evil use of the will (1,22) returns in 3,51–70 (ignorantia et difficultas). Evodius' first question 'How is it possible to will the first sin?' (1,23) returns in book 2,54. Evodius' second question 'Why are we punished, if we never were wise?' returns in 3,53–63 (why are we punished for the sin of Adam and Eve?). Augustine's answer to this question returns in 3,56–63, where he reviews three theories on the origin of the soul, which are compatible with the idea that we are punished for the sin of Adam.

[105] *lib. arb.* 1,25–6. The counterpart of this paragraph can be found in 3,64–70.

according to which God deals with us. He does so by arguing that, notwithstanding our moral ignorance and difficulty, we still have the option to not will our present situation. When Augustine says 'nothing is so completely within the power of the will as the will itself' (1,12,26), or that 'to attain a good will we have to do nothing but to will it' (1,13,29), he intends to express this ability to cease willing our present state of ignorance and difficulty.[106] He does not mean that we are able to overcome our present state by our own willpower. He merely makes the point that we all experience the freedom to not will our moral ignorance and difficulty.[107] Therefore, if we nonetheless affirm it, we freely choose against God and and are justly punished for that.

When Augustine says that the good will can be possessed with the greatest ease (*tanta facilitate*) and that this is the happy life (*beata uita*), he does not mean that we can possess, with the greatest ease, the free will to do the good (*libera uoluntas recte faciendi*), which Augustine later refers to as exclusively possessed by the first man.[108] He means rather the will by which we *want* to live rightly (*recte et honeste uelle uiuere*).[109] This will is easy to have. To qualify the possession of this good will as happiness is intended as a comparative judgement. Compared to a life that turns around the possession of temporal goods—in other words: a life dominated by lust—the will to live rightly is the best thing one can have in this life, as it makes us reject the life of vice. And as this will is so easy to have, one is justly punished if one nonetheless refuses to have it.[110]

Thus Augustine has defended the thesis that, even if we never were wise, doing evil is a free choice of the will in the sense that it is a voluntary affirmation of our present state of ignorance and difficulty.[111] What Augustine does not do in this passage is contend that we easily have the willpower to perform the good.[112] This line of argumentation recurs in *De libero arbitrio* 3,64–70, where Augustine says that the only freedom that remains for man after sin is the freedom to cry for help, rather than the freedom to perform the good.

Conclusion

From the discussion above I conclude that Augustine sees us as deeply implicated in the first sin. We are guilty of it, and the penal consequences of

[106] Babcock, 'Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency', 94–5; Madec, *Petites Études augustiniennes*, 133.
[107] Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 126. [108] *lib. arb.* 3,52.
[109] *lib. arb.* 1,29. [110] Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 121–2.
[111] Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 124–5.
[112] Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 126: 'The will on which his argument turns is not that *recte faciendi,* it is a will prior to and independent of the actual execution of good deeds.'

this sin both affect the body and the soul. As a consequence of the first sin, not only the body has become mortal, but also the soul has turned carnal by nature. It is no longer able to rule the body, but necessarily becomes its slave, because it naturally desires to find its beatitude through action in the body.

At the same time, Augustine describes the soul as making itself carnal by its own choices (which enables him to regard us as being in the same situation as Adam when we sin: evil thought, delight, consent, formation of habit[113]). This emphasis upon the action of human free will in the formation of habit seems not to be intended as an argument for human moral autonomy. It rather functions as a plea against the Manichees that man after the fall remains a rational and willing creature that is responsible for his own actions.

To what extent has man retained a freedom of his own to respond positively to God's admonitions? As I observed in the analysis of *De libero arbitrio* 1, Augustine holds the view that man has at least retained the freedom not to will his fallen situation, and cry to God for help. This important argument against the Manichees will resurface in Augustine's work in the 390s, but is finally eliminated from his anti-Manichaean discourse in *Ad Simplicianum* (397).

PUNISHMENT AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL THROUGHOUT SALVATION HISTORY

The Question of Punishment in the Old and New Testament in Scholarly Debate

In this section we turn to the meaning of law and punishment as pedagogical tools within salvation history. Augustine conceptualizes salvation history (*dispensatio temporalis*) in philosophical terms as a process of gradual education. After the fall, God reached out to save his people from their fallen condition through progressive stages of education, culminating in the incarnation of the divine Logos. What is the place of God's disciplinary punishment within this divine teaching process?

In scholarly literature, the question as to how God uses punishment as a pedagogical instrument in salvation history is especially discussed in the context of Augustine's justification of coercion against the Donatists. Whereas he had previously rejected the use of legal and military force to draw the Donatists back into the Catholic communion, from around 403 he began to justify these

[113] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,21. Cf. Verschoren, 'The Appearance of the Concept of Concupiscentia in Augustine's Early Anti-Manichaean Writings (388–391)', 199–240 (219); Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 64–5.

measures, partly because he witnessed their results and partly for theological reasons.[114]

The pioneering scholar in this field, Peter Brown, has argued that the early Augustine 'had thought that the ages before the coming of Christianity had belonged to a more primitive "stage of moral evolution"; and that, in his own days, Christianity was a purely spiritual religion. It had risen entirely above the physical sanctions and the enforced observances of that "shadowy past".'[115] Brown thus argues that according to Augustine, the good no longer needed to be enforced with physical sanctions, because of a moral evolution within the Christian religion.

His ideas reflect an influential article by Edward Cranz who argued that the early Augustine conceptualized the course of history in terms of universal progress, combining a Graeco-Roman theory of ascent from the material to the spiritual with the salvation-historical transition from the Old to the New Testament.[116] According to Cranz, Augustine identifies the distinction between lovers of temporal goods and lovers of eternal goods (*De libero arbitrio* 1) with the distinction between the Jews and the Christians. The lovers of temporal goods need the restraint of the temporal law, so that earthly peace is preserved. The lovers of eternal goods do not need the restraint of temporal laws, as they live according to God's eternal law. Although Augustine regards Jews and Christians as two distinct groups, he sees the former as an image of the latter. Just as the temporal law is an image of the eternal law, the people of the Old Testament were an image of the people of the New Testament.[117]

Cranz argues that Augustine before the 390s regarded the difference between two classes of people as a historical development within humanity.[118]

[114] See for Augustine's theological justification of state-sponsored coercion against the Donatists, e.g. Emilien Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration: An Intriguing Change of Mind in Augustine* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1975); H. Jans, 'De verantwoording van geloofsdwang tegenover ketters volgens Augustinus' correspondentie', *Bijdragen* 22/2–3 (1961), 133–60; 247–65; R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Theology in the Thought of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), ch. 6.; Herbert A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), ch. 6.; W. Geerlings, '*Foris inveniatur necessitas, nascitur intus voluntas*. Augustinus' Rechtfertigung des Zwangs', in *Fussnoten Zu Augustinus. Gesammelte Schriften Wilhelm Geerlings*, edited by Georg Röwekamp (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 151–62; P. J. J. van Geest, '"*Timor est servus caritatis*" (*s.* 156.13–14). Augustine's Vision on Coercion in the Process of Returning Heretics to the Catholic Church and his Underlying Principles', in *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity*, edited by A. Dupont, M. Gaumer, and M. Lamberigts. Late Antique History and Religion 9; (Leuven: Peeters 2015), 289–309.

[115] Peter Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude Towards Religious Coercion', *Journal of Roman Studies 64* (1964), 107–16, reprinted in Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Augustine* (London: Harper and Row, 1972), 263–76; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography. New Edition with an Epilogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 234.

[116] F. Edward Cranz, 'The Development of Augustine's Ideas on Society before the Donatist Controversy', *The Harvard Theological Journal* 47/4 (1954), 255–316 (275).

[117] Cranz, 'Development', 276.

[118] Cranz, 'Development', 275–6.

God gradually educates humanity to a higher state of moral consciousness and behaviour. From carnal they gradually become spiritual.[119] His periodization of history in six stages, parallel to the six stages of man's ascent to God, would express this progressive idea of history. Cranz further argues that Augustine abandons this view of history in the course of the 390s and eventually arrives at a position that equates the people of the Old Testament and the people of the New, in which the distinction between carnal and spiritual runs through both. Spiritual people were already present in the Old Testament, and those who belonged to the New Testament Church turned out to be much more like the carnal Israelites than Augustine had thought before. This growing equation between the people of the Old and the New Testament therefore caused Augustine to exchange his sixfold scheme of history for a fourfold scheme. Whereas the view of history as six developing stages had supported Augustine's ideal of moral progress, the fourfold scheme (*ante legem–sub lege–sub gratia–in pace*) stressed the abiding dominion of sin over man, which could only be broken by the rupture of grace.[120] Augustine had come to discover that the 'history of mankind . . . showed no obvious sign of an irreversible ascent, by "stages" towards a "spiritual" religion: the human race still lay, "like a great invalid", at all times in need of . . . authority.'[121]

This view of Augustine's early development is used by Brown to explain why Augustine increasingly came to value the fear of punishment as a means to foster conversion. Augustine became more and more impressed by the power of sin, and less and less convinced of his previous idea that conversion was a matter of rational insight brought about by teaching.[122] His flock appeared to be not that different from the obstinate Israelites of the Old Testament. Both groups of people were heavily bound by the force of habit and could not be educated by teaching and moral example alone. Temporal rulers were called to restrain these habits by instilling fear of punishment; only God's own intervention in their hearts could genuinely release them from the 'bond of habit' (*uinculum consuetudinis).* In his anti-Manichaean defence of Old Testament violence in the 390s Augustine already argued that physical sanctions, inflicted by God's ministers, were not by principle limited to the Old Testament dispensation. He pointed to the fact that also the apostles received the authority to inflict physical punishments upon unbelievers. In other words, in the time of the New Testament God could still use physical sanctions, inflicted by those he granted authority, in the service of the gospel. The idea that kings of the earth could serve Christ by putting their political

[119] Markus, *Saeculum*,78, argues that the progressive idea of God's education throughout salvation history represents the Graeco-Roman ideal of politics as aimed at human perfection. A wise ruler, who understands divine order, teaches his people by laws adapted to their understanding to reach perfection in virtue. Markus thus shares Cranz's view.

[120] Cranz, 'Development', 280.

[121] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 234.

[122] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 232.

authority to the service of Christ and his Church eventually led to Augustine's justification of the legal coercion of the Donatists.[123] Those entangled in the habit of schism could be awakened by the fear of punishment, and thus be led back to the Catholic Church.

In what follows we have to answer two questions. First, how does Augustine conceive of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament? Does he regard the development of salvation history as a gradual moral ascent of the human race, according to which humanity becomes more and more rational and less and less in need of the constraint? Second, what does Augustine's view on the progression from the Old to the New Testament imply for God's use of law and punishment as a pedagogical tool? Is it true that Augustine, before the 390s, opts against constraint, because the Christian religion has brought the people of God to a higher moral level?

The Shape of Augustine's Early Soteriology until 391

Before addressing the two questions mentioned above, I will first situate them in the broader context of Augustine's early thought on salvation. How can man be saved from his fallen state?

The answer to this question is: by the true religion. Through the Christian religion, the human soul regains its capacity for righteousness (*iustitia*), which Augustine defines as 'the ordering of the soul through which it serves no one but God, desires to be equal to no one than to pure souls, and to rule over no one than bestial and corporeal natures'.[124] The effect of this reordering of the soul is peace with God and peace between body and soul; in other words, it is the undoing of sin and its punishment. Through the Christian religion, the triune God comes to the help of humanity to fulfil this righteousness, helping sinful men to merit the promised reward of eternal beatitude.

In line with Platonic thought, the early Augustine understands salvation primarily in terms of the restoration of the soul's spiritual eyes. The mind that

[123] For a further description of how Augustine's thought developed after 396, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 235ff; Brown, 'St. Augustine's Attitude', 264–78. More on this issue is to be found in Chapter 4.

[124] *mus.* 6,50: '*Ordinatio animae qua nulli seruit nisi uni deo, nulli coaequari nisi purissimis animis, nulli dominari appetit nisi naturae bestiali atque corporeae*.' See for the virtue of righteousness also *mor.* 1,25, CSEL 90,29: '*Iustitia amor soli amato seruiens et propterea recte dominans*.' *uera rel.* 93, CCL 32,248: '*[Iustitia est] haec qua potius potiora et minus minora diligimus*.' For Pauline influences on Augustine's use of *iustitia*, see *uera rel.* 49, CCL 32,219: '*Finis ueteris hominis mors est, sic finis noui hominis uita aeterna. Ille namque homo peccati est, iste iustitiae*' (Rom. 6); *uera rel.* 76, CCL 32,237: '*. . . malum nisi peccatum et poena peccati, hoc est defectus uoluntarius a summa essentia et labor in ultima non uoluntarius, quod alio modo sic dici potest: libertas a iustitia et seruitus sub peccato*' (Rom. 6:20); *uera rel.* 82, CCL 32,242: '*Non est regnum dei esca et potus sed iustitia et pax et gaudium in spiritu sancto*' (Rom. 14:17).

has fallen in love with itself and the ever-fading world of matter must be gradually reaccustomed to the immaterial reality of God, in order to eventually attain the vision of God. The mind cannot do this on its own, but stands in need of a guiding authority. This authority is found in the Christian religion. Augustine's early stress on the mind's dependence upon a particular authority to reach the happy life is not in itself a specifically Christian idea. It can also be found in the Platonic tradition, in which the master-philosopher leads the pupil through the course of the liberal arts to the vision of intelligible reality and eventually to the vision of the good.[125] This is the core message of Plato's parable of the cave. Those who are tied up in the cave, forced to believe that the shadows on the wall are the real things themselves, need the guidance of a philosopher in order to be gradually led to the vision of the intelligible world of ideas.[126] In line with the tradition of the Greek apologists, Augustine teaches that in Christianity it is not a human authority that paves the way to heaven, but God himself who descends to humanity. Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24) descended to us in order to teach us how to attain happiness through a life of virtue.[127] Augustine connects this philosophical depiction of Christ with the Pauline image of the second Adam. The Wisdom of God, whom Adam left in pride, appeared visibly before our eyes, in order to teach us as a human being how to return to the original contemplation of his divinity.[128] He lived the life that we refused to live. Through his precepts he taught what righteousness is, and through his example he demonstrated this in his life. This life led to suffering and death, but his resurrection proved that a life of virtue eventually leads to the reward of happiness.[129] As such, Christ transcends all the philosophers that preceded him. They were neither able to live according to their own doctrine, nor could they convert the masses from their entanglement to the senses.[130] Christ, however, lived a life that was consistent with his doctrine, and he was able to convert the masses, as can be

[125] Cf. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 122.

[126] Cornelius Peter Mayer, *Die Zeichen in der geistigen Entwicklung und Theologie des jungen Augustinus. Die anti-manichäische Epoche* (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1974), 184–6.

[127] For Augustine's use of 1 Cor. 1:24 see *c. Acad.* 2,1; *mor.* 1,21–22.27; *an. quant.* 76; *lib. arb.* 1,5; *mag.* 38.45; *uera rel.* 3.110. Brian Dobell argues that Augustine sees the early Christ as a 'Plato for the masses' (43) and as the true Stoic *sapiens* (52). He further argues that Augustine held a Photinian Christology until somewhere in the 390s. See Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). In my opinion, he does not take sufficiently into account Augustine's emphasis on the redemptive activity of Christ as the divine Logos.

[128] Cf. *lib. arb.* 3,30.

[129] *uera rel.* 32–3; *ep.* 11,4; *ep.* 12. In these passages, Augustine calls the life of Christ a teaching of morals (*disciplina morum/uiuendi*). In *uera rel.* 30 Augustine says that the incarnation demonstrated 'what an exalted place is held by human nature among creatures'. Christ revealed the divine intention for human nature in his life. Cf. Geerlings, *Christus Exemplum*, 90 ('In Jesus Christus ist das Urbild des Menschen abgedeckt').

[130] *uera rel.* 1–5.

observed in the Christian Church, where ordinary men and women chose to forsake this world as martyrs or ascetics.[131] Augustine sees the Christian religion as the fulfilment of Platonist philosophy. All pagan philosophy longed to attain the knowledge of the truth. Platonism has been able to find the Creator, but has not been able to put this knowledge into practice by breaking with traditional idolatry. Only Christ was able to effectually release humanity from its idolatry with temporal reality and reunite men to the truth itself.[132]

What is the secret of Christ's victory? If he is only a teacher and an example, how then could he effect a change that other teachers had never been able to? This brings us to an often-neglected feature in Augustine's early soteriology: inward grace. Although the early Augustine mainly depicts Christ as a teacher (an image that will remain dominant in his work), he clearly confirms at several places that God himself enables humans to follow Christ. For example, Augustine sees God as the one who leads the Church to eternal rest by performing in us the works that he commands us to do.[133] Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is able to transform humanity, because he is not only an outward teacher, but the Truth and Wisdom of God itself through whom soul and body were created and are recreated.[134] Christ is the second Adam, who has become a life-giving Spirit.[135] It is through the indwelling of this Spirit of Christ that the soul is purified and the body will eventually be revivified.[136] In short, God's redeeming work through Christ cannot be reduced to a matter of teaching and moral example, but is a matter of re-creation of the entire person. This re-creation starts inwardly in the soul and is brought to perfection in the resurrection of the body.[137] By saying this, I do not deny that Augustine's early

[131] *uera rel.* 5–6.

[132] On Christianity as the true philosophy, see Ragnar Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 73–177; G. Madec, *Petites Études augustiniennes* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1994), 168.

[133] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,43; *an. quant.* 55.

[134] *uera rel.* 24–5; *mor.* 1,22 and 27. For Augustine's early view of Christ as more than an examplary teacher, see Pierre-Marie Hombert, 'La Christologie des trente-deux premières *Enarrationes in Psalmos* de saint Augustin', in *Augustin philosophe et prédicateur: hommage à Goulven Madec. Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011*, edited by Isabelle Bochet (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 432–63 (433, footnote 5). Goulven Madec (*Le Christ de saint Augustin: La Patrie et la Voie* (Paris: Desclée, 2001), 67) notes that we should not expect the early Augustine to explicitly write down everything he believed about Christ, so that later 'developments' are in fact no real developments, but only later expressions of what had already been in his mind. This might be true, but, as we cannot penetrate into Augustine's mind, we can only observe that his understanding of the work of Christ, especially with regard to the meaning of the cross, was enriched in the course of his writings.

[135] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,40.

[136] *mor.* 1,23; *mor.* 1,64; *uera rel.* 25; *mus.* 6,49. For further discussion, see Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 128–36.

[137] On the development of Augustine's view on the resurrection of the body, see Hermann Josef Sieben, *Augustinus. Studien zu Werk und Wirkgeschichte* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013), 132–71.

Christology has an intellectualist emphasis, embedded as it is within the philosophical model of *paideia*.[138] This approach to Christ—*Christus magister*—remains present throughout Augustine's writings until the end of his life. It is enriched, rather than superseded, by other Christological emphases that we will review in Chapter 4.[139]

This enrichment consists mainly of Augustine's increasing emphasis on the redemptive meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, as mediating the righteousness of God to human nature. His reading of Paul and the Psalms, his further immersion into the tradition of the Church, and his ongoing confrontation with the Christology of the Manichaeans would fuel a deeper appreciation of history as the means through which God enacts humanity's salvation from sin, rather than as a mere means of epistemological accommodation required for humanity's education in wisdom.[140]

The Relationship between the Old and the New Testament

Having discussed the broad lines of Augustine's early soteriology, we now turn to the major questions that were raised by our discussion of Cranz and Brown. First, how does Augustine conceive of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament? How does the coming of Christ relate to the history of God's people before him?

Augustine's theology of the relationship between Christ and the Old Testament is shaped by his polemics with Manichaeism. Manichaeism regarded the Old Testament dispensation as an invention of the kingdom of darkness, which attempted to hide the original religion of reason from the people of Israel. It regarded the God of the Old Testament and the religion that he imposed upon his people as primitive and unacceptable to the educated mind.[141] The God of the Old Testament had impeded the people of Israel from coming to a rational understanding of religion. He had taught them that religion is all

[138] Geerlings, *Christus Exemplum*, 90; Quy Cong Lam, 'Die Heilsbedeutung der Menschheit Jesu Christi in den Werken des Augustinus von Hippo' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis Catholic University of Leuven, 2005), 63–4; Mayer, *Zeichen*, vol. 2, 202.

[139] In this regard, I think Geerlings's judgement needs sophistication. He has argued that Augustine stopped using the word *disciplina* for Christ's life and teaching, because he discovered that we stand in need of inward grace in order to learn from Christ (Geerlings, *Christus Exemplum*, 91). Niebergal's suggestion might be helpful here. According to him Augustine already has an idea of grace as re-creation of the entire person (endowment of *forma, species, ordo*), flowing from his understanding of *creatio ex nihilo*, but it is not yet clearly connected to the historical work of Christ. See Niebergal, *Augustins Anschauung von der Gnade*, 74; Drecoll, *Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, 356.

[140] Augustine's neglect of the salvific nature of Christ's bodily death and his resurrection (although they are not denied) explains why BeDuhn sees so much similarity between Augustine's and Manichaean Christology. See BeDuhn, *Augustine's Anti-Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 1, 249–50.

[141] *c. Faust.* 22,1–3.

about observing rituals and material rewards, such as a long life on this earth, many children, and political stability. Moreover, this God permitted his people to commit immoral acts such as polygamy (the patriarchs), adultery (letter of divorce conceded by Moses), and genocide (the conquest of Canaan). The Manichees went on to argue that the carnal character of Israel's religion is to be explained from the very character of the Old Testament God himself. After all, he himself is presented in the Old Testament with the characteristics of a human being, who is jealous, desires to be fed by his subjects, and punishes them outrageously when they do not give him what he wants.[142]

Manichaeism regarded Jesus as the divine Saviour who redeemed humanity from the power of the Old Testament God by preaching a religion that was spiritual and rational. Adimantus, for example, wrote a book in which he paralleled Old Testament and New Testament texts and contended that they are often in blatant opposition to each other.[143] Whereas Moses taught the people of God the *lex talionis*, Christ taught the commandment of love and forgiveness.[144] While the God of the Old Testament promised his people earthly prosperity if they obeyed his commandments, Christ asks his followers to give up their life in this world in order to save their souls.[145] While the Old Testament God commanded his servants to slay the Canaanites and the priests of Baal, Jesus taught his disciples to turn the other cheek and forgive one's enemies.[146] Manichaeism thus posed a radical opposition between the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament.

Over against the Manichaean opposition of the Old and the New Testament, Augustine had to show on the one hand the continuity between both dispensations, and on the other hand explain in what respect the New Testament was New in relation to the Old. He does so by using the pedagogical idea of *accommodation*. A teacher has to accommodate himself to the situation of the pupil in order to lead him to knowledge. 'For, in the spot where a person has fallen, there one has to bend down, so that he may rise again.'[147] Augustine applies this idea to God's way of teaching humanity. Humanity is presented as a single human being whose mind has become darkened through sin.[148] In his

[142] *c. Faust.* 22. This critique of the Old Testament had been one of the reasons for Augustine himself joining the Manichees in his search for truth and wisdom.

[143] See Sjaak van de Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice: The Case of Adimantus and Augustine* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010).

[144] *c. Adim.* 4. Although Augustine does not yet address these questions explicitly before his book *Contra Adimantum* (394), he must have had knowledge of this Manichaean critique from the time he was a Manichaean *auditor* himself.

[145] *c. Adim.* 18. [146] *c. Adim.* 17.

[147] *uera rel.* 45, CCL 32,215: '*Nam in quem locum quisque ceciderit, ibi debet incumbere, ut surgat.*'

[148] *uera rel.* 50, CCL 32,219: '*. . . Uniuersum genus humanum, cuius tamquam unius hominis uita est ab Adam usque ad finem huius saeculi, ita sub diuinae prouidentiae legibus administratur.*' Cf. *uera rel.* 46; *diu. qu.* 49; *ciu.* 10, 14.

historical project of redemption (*dispensatio temporalis*[149]), God uses material images and temporal rules to eventually lead his people to the understanding of and love for eternal realities.[150] From infants, which are necessarily bound to a carnal way of thinking, they are raised to adulthood, the period in which they receive the opportunity to be regenerated and become spiritual in their thinking.[151] By thus perceiving God's revelation in the Old and the New Testament as a matter of accommodation, Augustine is able to do justice to both unity and difference between the Testaments.

In his explanation of the *temporalis dispensatio* Augustine goes about as follows. Throughout salvation history, God has one teaching project for the mind (*rationalis disciplina*[152]), but it is presented in two ways, namely partly in a straightforward manner, and partly by comparisons in words, deeds, and sacraments, which are accommodated to the carnal mind and intend to rouse the soul to seek for the realities that they signify.[153] Augustine divides these two ways of teaching between the Old and the New Testament. God started his covenant with Israel by separating them from the nations and their idols and dedicating them to himself. In the Old Testament God commands his people to observe all kinds of rituals and less far-reaching moral laws, to which he attached the promise of prosperity in an earthly kingdom. Both these observances and their rewards signified in a hidden way the teaching of Christ and the reward for following Him in the New Testament.[154] The hidden meaning of the Old Testament religion is revealed in the teaching of Christ and the

[149] For the background of this term, see Hoffmann, *Anfänge*, 22: 'Die dispensatio temporalis ist also das Werk der göttlichen Providenz, d.h. die göttliche Providenz teilt das Leben der Menschheit und des Einzelmenschen ein in Stufen einer zeitlichen Entwicklung, die zur vita aeterna führt. Der Sinn dieser dispensatio ist eine "reformation" und "reparation".' The term is closely connected to the concept of authority.

[150] Cranz, 'Development', 275; Markus, *Saeculum*, 80; Hofmann, *Anfänge*, 144.

[151] *diu. qu.* 49.

[152] Marrou has observed that *disciplina*, as distinct from *doctrina*, in Augustine and other writers often refers to knowledge in its practical consequences for life. In the Vulgate it is used as a translation of *paideia*, the wisdom of the law of God, on which the life according to his commandments is based. See H. I. Marrou, '*Doctrina* et *Disciplina* dans la langue des Pères de l'Église', 5–25 (esp. 11–12, 16). Cf. *mor.* 1,27 (where Augustine connects *disciplina* to *sapientia* and *uirtus* to action that is based on this wisdom). Clearly, philosophical and biblical wisdom traditions merge in the early Augustine.

[153] *uera rel.* 33, CCL 32, 207: '*Iam uero ipse totius doctrinae modus partim apertissimus partim similitudinibus in dictis, in factis, in sacramentis ad omnem animae instructionem exercitationemque accommodatus, quid aliud quam rationalis disciplinae regulam impleuit? Nam et mysteriorum expositio ad ea dirigitur, quae apertissime dicta sunt, et si ea tantum essent, quae facillime intelleguntur, nec studiose quaereretur nec suauiter inueniretur ueritas.*'

[154] *uera rel.* 33. Augustine argues that God in the Old Testament used a double form of teaching, namely by speaking to the mind and by letting his people perform particular sacraments, in order to guarantee that knowledge and action would be in agreement with each other (*satis cum cognitione actio conueniret*). This Old Testament form of teaching is fulfilled in Christ's *praecepta*, which have to be acknowledged by the mind and in his *exemplum*, which has to be imitated in our actions.

moral life of the Church. The meaning of its earthly reward will be revealed after the second coming of Christ, when God will give Himself to his people as their everlasting rest.[155] The relationship between Old and New Testament then, can be described as *occultatio* and *revelatio*.[156]

The relationship between God's revelation in both Testaments can be further illuminated by the distinction between the eternal and the temporal law. The eternal law applies to the entire person, to all men at all times. It commands that we abandon the lust for temporal things (*temporalia*) and set our hearts purely on eternal things (*aeterna*). The reward for its obedience is eternal beatitude, whereas the penalty that follows upon disobedience is slavery to lust (*libido*).[157] The temporal law somehow mirrors the requirements of the eternal law,[158] but is only concerned with the actions of people, not with the disposition of the human heart. The reward for obedience to this law is temporal peace, whereas disobedience is punished with temporal affliction.[159] Applied to our subject, one might say that God gave his people in the Old Testament a temporal law that pointed to the eternal law, but was accommodated to carnal people who were not able to fulfil the commands of the eternal law. It constrained sinful behaviour through fear of temporal punishment. In the New Testament, however, God sets his people free from the slavery to lust through the love of the Holy Spirit, so that they become receptive to the teaching and example of Christ, and are enabled to live according to the eternal law. This reformation of man is eventually fulfilled in the eternal Sabbath.

The difference between the people to whom God gave the religion of the Old Testament and those of the New is therefore often characterized by Augustine as a difference between fear (*timor*) and love (*caritas*), or between slavery (*seruitus*) and freedom (*libertas*). He describes God's pedagogy in the Old Testament as coercion (*coercitio*) through fear, which led to a servile righteousness,[160] whereas he characterizes God's pedagogy in the New Testament as teaching (*instructio*) through love, leading to the highest form of righteousness.[161] However, this does not mean that there is an absolute spiritual progress on the side of God's people throughout salvation history, as Cranz suggested in his article. Augustine acknowledges that the Spirit of Christ was already at work among the Old Testament people of God and that the New Testament people of God, as long as they live on this earth,

[155] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,43.

[156] Wolfgang Wieland, *Offenbarung bei Augustinus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1978), 295–7; A. D. R. Polman, *Het Woord van God bij Augustinus* (Kampen: Kok, 1952), 95–7.

[157] *lib. arb.* 1,13; 1,22. [158] *lib. arb.* 1,12. [159] *lib. arb.* 1,32. [160] *uera rel.* 50.

[161] *uera rel.* 34; *mor.* 1,56. On *mor.* 1,56 and the difference between *coercitio* and *instructio* see Agostino Clerici, 'La *disciplina* comme medicina animi (*mor.* 1,27,52–28,56)' in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum: De quantitate animae di Agostino d'Ippona*, edited by J. Kevin Coyle et al. (Palermo: Augustinus, 1991), 121–30; J. Kevin Coyle, *Augustine's 'de moribus ecclesiae catholicae'* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1978), 392–4.

form a *corpus permixtum*, in which many are as carnal as the Israelites, and all are struggling with the old man and stand in need of ongoing purification. In other words, the equation between the Old and the New Testament people of God is already present before the 390s.

Augustine explicitly affirms that God's covenant with Israel was intended to bring forth a real people for God. For this purpose he separated them from the nations and gave them the law and the prophecies as rain from heaven that enabled the dry land to bring forth beneficial crops.[162] As previously indicated, most people under the Old Testament dispensation did not make a right use of God's revelation, but Augustine notes that others, particularly the Old Testament office bearers like the prophets and the patriarchs, were effectively regenerated through it. 'Whoever deserved in the times of the earthly people to attain to the illumination of the inward man helped the human race at that time by presenting it with what that age required and by prophetically hinting at what was not oppurtune to exhibit.'[163] Thus, they helped those who were entrusted to them to 'long for the grace of God, about whose future coming the prophets used to sing'.[164] Contrary to what Cranz suggests in his article, Augustine already states here that the grace of Christ was present in the Old Testament. Two groups of people where helped by it. First, the *spiritales*, who were already able to understand the eternal law, accommodated themselves in their teaching and practice to those who were not yet able to understand.[165] The second group, the *carnales*, longed for the grace of Christ, but did not yet understand it. The others in Israel were completely blind to higher wisdom and only longed for temporal goods.

With regard to the people of the New Testament, Augustine emphasizes that, although they received the full revelation of God's will in Christ and the Spirit who renews them accordingly, the promise of the New Testament is yet to be fulfilled for them. They are striving towards the full contemplation of God in a life of good works, but will only inherit it after the final resurrection.[166] The new life is described as a gradual decline of the old man and a gradual growth of the new man. During this life, one can only live the life of the new man together

[162] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,37.

[163] *uera rel.* 51, CCL 32,220: '*Quisquis autem populi terreni temporibus usque ad illuminationem interioris hominis meruit peruenire, genus humanum pro tempore adiuuit exhibens ei, quod aetas illa poscebat, et per prophetiam intimans id, quod exhibere opportunum non erat.*'

[164] *uera rel.* 33. In *mor.* 1,40–5 Augustine also refers to several Old Testament saints who display the New Testament virtues, thus indicating that true love for God was already present in the Old Testament.

[165] The difference between *carnales* and *spiritales* is derived from 1 Cor. 3:1–3. Augustine had used this distinction in earlier writings such as *De ordine*, where he distinguished between Christians who are able to surpass authority with reason, and those who remain dependent upon faith during this life in the body. This distinction between two classes of Christians goes back to Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

[166] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,41; 1,43.

with the old one.[167] This is why the external signs of the sacraments (although these are fewer in number than the sacraments of the Old Testament),[168] the teachings and example of Christ, and the correction by ministers still have an important role to play in the Church. For this purpose of ongoing sanctification, Christians also still profit from reading the Old Testament.[169]

At the same time, Augustine distinguishes different spiritual groups within the Church.[170] The *spiritales* have a very deep insight in the truths to which the external signs refer. The *carnales* are those who are much more dependent upon the 'milk of authority'. They still have an unbecoming understanding of God's nature and of the happy life. They are nourished at the breasts of the Church, each according to his own capacities, in order to grow to wisdom and virtue.[171] The *spiritales* are called to exercise love towards them, by accommodating their teaching to the spiritual capabilities of these little ones in Christ.[172] Although the *spiritales* have progressed much further than the *carnales*, they nonetheless run the risk of sinning, namely by pride and self-elevation.[173] The third category that is present within the Church is the chaff amongst the wheat. These are the people who stick with the old man and either remain in the Church until the final judgement, or leave the Church beforehand through excommunication, schism, or heresy.[174] In short, the Church is depicted as a mixed body, whose 'sons' are constantly in need of admonition and correction, because they have not yet reached final beatitude.[175]

[167] *uera rel.* 49; 51.

[168] Explicit references to the sacraments before 391: *mor.* 1,80, CSEL 90,86: '*Et illo sacrosancto lauacro inchoatur innouatio noui hominis*'; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,37, CSEL 91,161: '*Formata est ergo ei [Christo] coniunx ecclesia de latere eius, id est de fide passionis et baptismi. Nam percussum latus eius lancea sanguinem et aquam profudit*'; *an. quant.* 80 (on the baptism of children).

[169] *uera rel.* 33, CCL 32,208: '*Ita nec seruiliter alligant et exercent liberaliter animum.*'

[170] *uera rel.* 51. [171] *mor.* 1,17.

[172] On this category of people in the Church, see R. J. Teske, 'A Decisive Admonition to Augustine?', *Augustinian Studies* 19 (1988), 87: 'The *parvuli*, then, are those in the Church who are unable to understand invisible or spiritual realities and think of God as having a bodily shape and even a human form. They are contrasted with the adults in Christ who can take solid food; they are called "carnal" or "animal men" as opposed to "spiritual men". Once Augustine calls the carnal man "a little one in Christ, like God's cattle (*pecus dei*)." Such *pecudes*, he later explains, are "those who live simply in the Church, useful [members], not very learned, but full of faith." Such men of simple faith are not limited to the laity, but include bishops and priests as well.'

[173] *diu. qu.* 83,36.

[174] On separation from the Church in this time through schism and heresy, see *uera rel.* 9–10. On the living together of wheat and chaff, saints and sinners, see *uera rel.* 9, CCL 32,194 (*ad tempus ultimae uentilationis uelut paleas sustinere*). In *mor.* 1,76, CSEL 90,81 Augustine says that the Church corrects *malos filios* by condemning their sins. With God's help and good will they are corrected. Others, however, who persevere in their sins, are permitted to grow together with the wheat, until the final separation takes place (*qui autem uoluntate mala in pristinis uitiis perseuerant aut etiam addunt grauiora prioribus, in agro quidem domini sinuntur esse et cum bonis seminibus crescere, sed ueniet tempus quo zizania separentur*). Augustine further emphasizes that God uses the wicked to exercise the good in vigilance and love (*uera rel.* 50).

[175] Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church*, 299.

This short overview of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament in Augustine's thought before 391 shows that although he does indeed see progress within salvation history, this progress primarily consists in God's salvific acts. God moved from prophecy to fulfilment, from carnal promises to spiritual promises. There is no spiritual ascent as such within the people of God. Throughout time, there is one spiritual people of God, consisting of degrees of spiritual maturity, living in the midst of the godless. Together, they form God's Church in time, until the final separation. This is important with regard to the question of what function the threat of punishment serves throughout salvation history. This question is treated in the next section.

Divine Judgement in the Old and the New Testament

According to Cranz and Brown, the early Augustine taught that God in the time of the New Testament ceased to use a pedagogy of fear by punishment, because his people had reached a higher level of moral consciousness. They could now be instructed by words, instead of constrained by fear of the consequences of their actions. We observed, however, that salvation-historical progress is not so much a moral evolution within the Church, but rather a progression of divine revelation, from sign to reality. The threat of punishment does not disappear, but its nature changes. The threat of temporal punishment in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the threat of eternal punishment in the New.

The law to which God bound his people in the Old Testament was a temporal one. Obedience to it granted the individual or the nation temporal peace. Disobedience was followed by temporal punishment. But these realities were images. The temporal law pointed beyond itself to the eternal law, the temporal peace within the borders of an earthly kingdom pointed to the eternal peace of the contemplation of God. Temporal punishment, inflicted by temporal rulers, pointed to eternal punishment, based upon the eternal law, inflicted by the Son to whom the Father has entrusted the judgement of the world.[176] It is therefore misleading to suggest that God's New Testament Church no longer needs temporal punishment, because it has reached a higher level of moral consciousness. On the contrary, Augustine argues at several places that Christians benefit from God's temporal chastisements. The reason that God no longer uses temporal punishment as the means to rule his Church is because the Church is no longer a nation-state ruled by temporal laws. This typological phase of the Church has come to an end, the time of fulfilment has

[176] *uera rel.* 58.

arrived. The last period of history is the time in which the Church lives between the typological and the eschatological kingdom (Israel and eternal life), and awaits final judgement.[177]

Augustine develops his typological understanding of salvation history in *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* (the scheme of six ages mentioned by Cranz).[178] He compares the different stages of God's history with his people both to the stages of a person's life (*infantia, pueritia, adolescentia, iuuentus, senectus*) and to the days of creation.[179] Just like the days of creation, each phase starts with a morning and ends with an evening. Augustine interprets the mornings as God's salvific initiatives, such as the salvation of Noah in the ark, the covenant with Abraham, the kingdom of David, the preservation of Jewish communities in the time of exile, and finally and decisively the sending of Christ (as the reality to which the earlier salvific events pointed). The evenings represent the sins of the people and God's judgement over them. Every time Israel turns away from the God who bound them to himself, he punishes them in order to convert them and to further the process of their re-creation. Until the coming of Christ, however, the history of Israel is nothing more than a hopeless chastisement of the old man, under the law. There is no progress until Christ, in whom the old man is put to death and the new man raised to life. In him, humanity is finally recreated. Those who reject him as the fulfilment of Israel's history remain old and have to undergo final damnation,[180] which is prefigured in the final destruction of the temple.[181]

The New Testament Church reads the history of Israel as a prophetic announcement of the dispensation in which she herself lives. Christ brings the eternal salvation that was prophetically announced by God's temporal acts of salvation in the Old Testament. The punishments of Israel, with the destruction of the nation as its apex, function as an image of the punishment

[177] Old Testament believers already understood that temporal judgements pointed to this reality. Unbelievers in the time of the New Testament will never be touched by the threat of future judgement, as they are inclined to make themselves believe that God does not punish sins (cf. *diu. qu.* 36,1).

[178] Augustine also uses this scheme in *diu. qu.* 40; 64,2; *cat. rud.* 22,39; *trin.* 4,7; *ciu.* 22,30.

[179] On this periodization of history see Hoffmann, *Anfänge*, 202–14; Auguste Luneau, *L'Histoire du salut chez les pères de l'eglise: la doctrine des ages du monde* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1964); Karl Heinz Schwarte, *Die Vorgeschichte der augustinischen Zeitalterlehre* (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt Verlag, 1966). The comparison between the days of creation and the stages of salvation history is intended to stress against the Manichees that the Father of Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, and the Creator are one and the same God. Cf. Cari Kloos, 'History as Witness: Augustine's Interpretation of the History of Israel in *Contra Faustum* and *De Trinitate*', in *Augustine and History*, edited by Christopher T. Daly, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2008), 31–51 (34–6).

[180] *uera rel.* 10, CCL 32,194: '*Rudimenta noui populi ab humilitate surgentia in ipsis suis scripturis nimia securitate noluerunt aduertere atque ita in uetere homine remanserunt.*'

[181] *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,40.

that will meet those who reject Christ.[182] Just as in the other stages of the Church's life on earth, the last phase of her existence in history will end with apostasy and God's consequent judgement. That will be the moment at which God finally separates the old and the new man.

As the world approaches this decisive moment, the Church has the task of instilling the fear of God in those to whom she is sent. As a general rule of teaching Augustine states that piety starts with fear of punishment and then proceeds to love of justice.[183] Therefore, the Church should first instil the fear of God's punishment in those who are not yet converted, hoping that this fear will evolve into a genuine love of God. In this regard, the order of conversion resembles the order of salvation history.[184] Just as God started the conversion of the human race through fear of punishment and proceeded to teach them the love of justice through the grace of Christ, he starts the conversion of the individual with the instilment of fear, which evolves into genuine love through conversion.

This does not mean, however, that the converted person no longer stands in need of discipline. As long as the old man exercises his influence upon the new man, Christians remain in need of discipline. Influenced by a widespread philosophical commonplace, Augustine compares the Church's discipline to the art of medicine. Just as remedies must be adapted to the situation of the patient, disciplinary measures should be accommodated to the nature of a person's sins.[185] For those who are baptized, one starts from the assumption that admonition is enough, because they have been set free by Christ to be taught through love, rather than coerced by fear. However, as we observed, just like the Israelites of old, Christians can also become entangled in sin and need a more severe treatment to be brought back on the right track. At this point,

[182] Thus Augustine seems to express the teaching of Rom. 11:20–1 where Paul says God's cutting off of the natural branches (unbelieving Israel) is a warning to the branches that have been inserted later (the Christians from the Gentiles). This suggestion is also made by Karl Heinz Schwarte, *Die Vorgeschichte der augustinischen Zeitalterlehre*, 42. See also *util. cred.* 8 (392); in this text Augustine quotes 1 Cor. 10:11 where Paul says that God's temporal judgements over Israel are intended as *correptiones* for us 'over whom the end of the ages has come'.

[183] *mor.* 1,56, CSEL 90,60: '*Agit ergo his gradibus, quod ad animum pertinet, ut primo timeat deinde diligat Deum. Hi mores sunt optimi, per quos nobis etiam ipsa prouenit, ad quam omni studio rapimur, agnitio ueritatis*.' *uera rel.* 33, CCL 32,207: '*Pietas timore inchoatur, caritate perficitur*.'

[184] *diu. qu.* 49, CCL 44A,76: '*Quod ergo in uno homine recte educato ordine naturae disciplinaque contingit, hoc proportione in uniuerso genere humano fieri per diuinam prouidentiam peragique pulcherrimum est*.'

[185] Cf. *mor.* 1,62, CSEL 90,66: '*. . . etiam proximi dilectionem atque caritatem ita complecteris, ut uariorum morborum, quibus pro peccatis suis animae aegrotant, omnis apud te medicina praepolleat*.' In *mor.* 1,64 Augustine also expresses this sensibility, saying that to instil the fear of punishment is useless if it is not complemented with the love of virtue. On the need for discernment in applying ecclesiastical penalties for sin, see *diu. qu.* 83,26.

the instilment of the fear of divine judgement is needed to convince the sinner that God rules all humans, and that no sin remains unpunished.

In this period of his career, Augustine does not yet address the question of whether temporal rulers have the task of applying their temporal authority in the service of church discipline. He does subscribe, however, to the Platonic notion that temporal rulers should derive the content of their laws from the eternal law.[186] In a Christian empire this could come to mean that the laws of Christian emperors should reflect the interests of the Christian religion, which had indeed come to pass, for example, in the anti-heretical laws promulgated by Emperor Theodosius.[187] In the works that Augustine wrote before his ordination, however, he does not express himself on the question whether temporal rulers should somehow serve the Church's disciplinary practice.

LAW AND FEAR IN AUGUSTINE'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS

This section further addresses the meaning of divine judgement in the Christian life. In Chapter 2 I discussed the function of divine judgement in Augustine's understanding of ascent through the levels of the soul. In his Thagastan writings, Augustine continues to use models of ascent, but now he increasingly concentrates on the importance of virtue and the exercise of love for the neighbour, rather than on the levels of the soul.[188] This section gives an example of such a model of ascent and thematizes the function of divine judgement within it.

In his treatise on the fostering of love (*de nutrienda caritate*), Augustine describes the process of conversion and subsequent spiritual progress. He argues that the fear of the Lord is both the beginning and the completion of this process (cf. Ps. 111:10). Augustine starts with the question how to instil the fear of the Lord in the unregenerate. He first observes that, although they know by reason that their sins deserve punishment, they use this same reason to make themselves believe that they can hide their sins and avoid punishment. They suppress the eternal law which is stamped upon their minds, in order to continue sinning.[189] In order to foster the beginning of love

[186] *lib. arb.* 1,12.

[187] Already in 372 Theodocius had issued a law against the Manichees, which prescribed heavy punishments on those who attended Manichaean gatherings. See *Codex Theodosianus*, 16,5,3 (ed. Mommsen, Sources Chrétiennes, no. 497, 229–30).

[188] Harrison, *Rethinking*, ch. 3; Kenney, *Contemplation*, 94.

[189] *diu. qu.* 36,1, CCL 44A,55: '*Inest homini ratio, quae cum seruit cupiditati peruersione miserabili, ut homines non timeantur, suggerit latere posse commissa . . .*'

and wisdom, therefore, the innate knowledge of God's law must be invigorated in them, which produces a sense of guilt and fear. In order to achieve this, the unbeliever must be confronted with the reality of God's providence. Augustine explains:

> So that God may be feared, it must be made clear that divine providence governs all things, [but this must be made clear] not so much by reasons . . . as by recent examples, however they may occur, or by history, especially by that which, through the administration of divine providence itself, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, has obtained the most excellent authority of religion . . . Both the punishment for sins and the rewards for good deeds must be discussed.[190]

In other words, through the examples of history, carnal people should be persuaded that God, who governs everything by his providence, does not leave sins unpunished.

Hopefully, the teaching of divine providence inspires a fear of God's judgement in the unbeliever. If he begins to fear God, and his lust decreases, this is a sign that a certain degree of love for God has originated in him.[191] The person has made the first step towards true piety. At this point he is ready to prepare for and receive the sacrament of baptism. In the waters of baptism, he lays off the old man, and is regenerated unto the life of the new man. The example of Christ teaches the newborn believer how to live this new life, dedicated to God's commandments.

After conversion, the love of God still needs to be accompanied by a fear of God and his disapproval of sin. This fear is salutary, becaue the believer still runs the risk of destroying his love of God, namely by displaying it to others in order to gain their praise. Therefore, Augustine advises, Christians who have progressed on the ladder of virtue still need the warning that the Lord will judge hypocrites. Thus Christians are stimulated to grow further in their love of God by spurning the praise of men.

If this desire for praise has been conquered, there is one final danger left: the sin of pride. This is the sin through which all other virtues can be lost.[192] If a Christian has reached the highest level of virtue, but boasts as if he is himself the source of that virtue, he corrupts all virtue and makes himself liable to eternal damnation. Therefore, even the most perfected Christian needs to fear the possibility that 'even that which he seems to possess is taken away from

[190] *diu. qu.* 36,1, CCL 44A,55: '*Ut autem timeatur deus, diuina prouidentia regi uniuersa persuadendum est non tam rationibus, quas qui potest inire potest iam et pulchritudinem sentire uirtutis, quam exemplis uel recentibus, si qua occurrunt, uel de historia, et ea maxime quae ipsa diuina prouidentia procurante siue in ueteri siue in nouo testamento excellentissimam auctoritatem religionis accepit. Simul autem agendum est et de poenis peccatorum et de praemiis recte factorum*' (translation: WSA 1/12, 52).

[191] *diu. qu.* 36,1, CCL 44A,55: '. . . *huius [cupiditas] minuendae initium est deum timere, qui solus timeri sine amore non potest.*'

[192] Cf. *en. Ps.* 18,1,14.

him and that he, with hands and feet tied, is cast into the outer darkness'.[193] As a Christian remains vulnerable to the sin of pride, his love of God needs to be accompanied by a fear of God as judge until the end of his life in the body. This fear keeps purifying the love of God. This leads Augustine to the conclusion that the fear of God's judgement stands at the beginning of the Christian life, and accompanies the Christian until the end: 'This is why the fear of God not only begins but also completes wisdom—that is, in him who loves God most of all and loves his neighbour as himself.'[194] The fear of the Lord starts with the fear of temporal punishment for disobedience to the divine law and continues to be accompanied by the fear of God and his disapproval, as long as it is liable to sin.

AUGUSTINE'S FORCED ORDINATION

Before we proceed to the conclusion of this chapter, we take up the autobiographical line of the *Soliloquia*, to see how God's discipline of Augustine after his conversion proceeds.

It is well known that Augustine was forced to become a presbyter and to leave the life of philosophical leisure, which he had regarded as the best way to be healed from the desires for temporal comfort and to find rest in God alone. He knew that there were church officials whom God had granted to exercise their office without longing for temporal gain. Although they worked among people who were still full of vices, they themselves preserved the best way of life and had a peaceful and tranquil mind.[195] However, Augustine also knew of church officials who were driven by a desire for honour and a love of engagement in a busy or 'important' life.[196] The life of action in the world (*negotium*) seduced them into allowing their tranquillity of mind to be disturbed.

This is what Augustine wanted to avoid for himself. He regarded the isolated life of carefree leisure (*otium*) as the best way to free his mind from worldly loves, to strengthen himself in the love for God, and acquire tranquillity in the face of death (*deificari in otio*).[197] Yet, this was not a purely

[193] *diu. qu.* 36,4, CCL 44A,57: '*Itaque adhuc necessarius est timor, ne illud etiam quod uidetur habere auferatur ab eo, et manibus ac pedibus ligatis mittatur in tenebras exteriores.*'

[194] *diu. qu.* 36,4, CCL 44A,57–8: '*Quapropter dei timor non solum inchoat, sed etiam perficit sapientiam, id est in illo qui summe diligit deum et proximum tamquam se ipsum*' (translation: WSA 1/12, 54).

[195] *mor.* 1,69; *ep.* 10,2. [196] *ep.* 10,2.

[197] *ep.* 10,2. For the expression '*deificari in otio*', see Roland J. Teske, *Augustine of Hippo: Philosopher, Exegete and Theologian. A Second Collection of Essays* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2009), 97–110. Roland Teske argues over against George Folliet (who interpreted the sentence as an expression of Porphyrian, anti-corporeal self-deification) that this phrase should be interpreted in a Christian way. He takes his argument from Augustine's broader use of *deificare* and from the contemporary *uera rel.* 65. According to Teske, *deificari*

individualistic project. Augustine lived in a monastic community, and served his brothers in that context. Moreover, he wanted to serve the Church as a Christian intellectual, which is already clear from *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos*, written for ordinary Catholics.[198] But the best way to be of use for human society, Augustine argues, is by withdrawing oneself 'from the tumult of perishable things' (*tumultum rerum labentium*), without having to bear secular responsibilities.[199] Augustine wanted to serve Church and society as a withdrawn intellectual, surrounded by likeminded friends.

Augustine knew, however, that his fame had made him a likely candidate for the priesthood. As he wanted to preserve his way of life at Thagaste, he avoided visiting churches with vacant bishoprics, but he misjudged the situation of Hippo Regius (which already had a bishop). Bishop Valerius strategically asked his congregation to look out for a helper, and they immediately forced Augustine to take this position. Augustine was shocked and cried. Some of the parishioners thought that he did so because he had hoped for a higher position. They consoled him, saying that his priesthood was at least a step toward the bishopric. Augustine, however, would later contend that he grieved 'at the many great dangers which the government and administration of the Church would bring upon him'.[200]

Epistula 21 reveals how Augustine interpreted his forced ordination theologically, acknowledging it as a chastisement by which God had made him aware of the state of his own heart. In this letter he observes that ecclesiastical offices are much desired for self-serving purposes. Exactly because he wanted to avoid this danger, Augustine had preferred his life of leisure to an ecclesiastical position. However, he now acknowledges, from his place 'on the shore' he had come to perceive himself as morally superior to his colleagues in the Church. He had believed that avoiding the dangers of the sea, by taking refuge

in otio means that God frees the human mind from the fear of death through a life of *otium,* in which the Christian transfers his love for the temporal towards God. In *uera rel.* 65 Augustine describes this process as 'receiving the power to become children of God' (John 1:12) and 'subjecting oneself to the yoke of Christ' (Matt. 11:29). Such a child of God is no longer subject to temporal creation (fearing its loss), but subjects it to himself and is totally free of any fear of being separated from it. This person has gained the freedom to love God and the neighbour with all his heart and mind.

[198] Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church*, 332. See also Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, 3 on Augustine's orientation on the Church as *seruus dei*: 'The truths which God revealed to his mind through meditation and prayer he communicated to present and absent alike, instructing them in sermons and books.' For further discussion on Augustine's positive connection to the Church during his time in Thagaste, see G. Madec, 'Augustin prêtre: quelques notes pour la célébration d'un 16e centenaire 391–1991', in *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes: antiquité tardive et Christianisme ancien (IIIe–Vie siècles). Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, edited by Louis Holtz et al. (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992), 185–99 (186–7).

[199] *ep.* 10,2.

[200] *s.* 355,2; Possidius, *Life of Saint Augustine* (introduction by Michele Pellegrino; Villanova, Pa: Augustinian Press, 1988), 4.

in the harbour of philosophy, had rendered him superior to the sailors on the sea. But when he was forced to become a helmsman himself, and lead the ship of the Church in the midst of the storms, he had come to learn that his freedom from the cares of the world had been based upon the avoidance of temptation rather than upon inner moral strength. His life of leisure had deceived him about the moral state of his soul. He had been criticizing his colleagues from the mountain of vainglory.[201]

Augustine interprets his forced ordination as God's punishment for this pride (*uis mihi facta est merito peccatorum meorum*). 'I think that my Lord wanted to correct me in that way, precisely because I dared, as if I were more learned and better, to reprimand the mistakes of many sailors before I had experienced what is involved in their work.'[202] Only when he was himself 'thrown in the midst of the sea' did he come to know the heedlessness of his critique. He had always known the difficulties of the ecclesiastical office (especially the difficulty of living piously among iniquitous men),[203] but nevertheless his life of leisure had seduced him into thinking that he was better skilled than those who actually held such a position. But when he was ordained and had to be a 'helmsman' himself, he felt how little skilled he actually was. 'I have experienced this [the difficulty of his task] much more extensively than I thought, not because I saw some new waves or storms about which I previously had not known, heard, read or thought. Rather, I had not at all known my own skill and strength for avoiding or enduring them, and I thought them [my skills] to be of some value. The Lord, however, laughed at me and chose to reveal me to myself by this experience.'[204] These words do no just refer to the moment of Augustine's ordination (when he actually shed tears, because of the burden that was laid upon him), but especially to the time thereafter, when he came to experience the burden of his task.[205] This time of suffering under this burden (maybe already a few years), finally led to his request for a period of sabbatical in *Epistula* 21. Augustine reveals to Valerius that upon his ordination, he had tried to equip himself for his task as well as

[201] Augustine's use of sea imagery in this letter recalls the context of *De beata uita* 1–4 where Augustine also warns for the danger of criticizing the sailors on the sea out of a misguided judgement about the inner state of one's own soul.

[202] *ep.* 21,2, CSEL 34, 1,50: '*Arbitror Dominum meum propterea me sic emendare uoluisse, quod multorum peccata nautarum, antequam expertus essem, quid illic agitur, quasi doctior et melior reprehendere audebam*' (translation: WSA 2/1, 55).

[203] *mor.* 1,69.

[204] *ep.* 21,2, CSEL 34, 1,51: '*Sed multo valde ac multo amplius expertus sum, quam putabam: non quia novos aliquos fluctus aut tempestates vidi quas ante non noveram, vel non audieram, vel non legeram, vel non cogitaveram; sed ad eas evitandas aut perferendas solertiam et vires meas omnino non noveram, et alicuius momenti arbitrabar. Dominus autem inrisit me et rebus ipsis ostendere uoluit me ipsum mihi*' (translation: WSA 2/1, 56).

[205] Augustine refers here to what he elsewhere calls the *sarcina* of his office. See Maurice Jourjon, 'Sarcina: un mot cher à l'évèque d'Hippone', *Recherches de science religieuse* 43/2 (1955), 258–62; George Lawless, 'Augustine's Burden of Ministry', *Angelicum* 61 (1984), 295–315.

possible. He had used all of his scarce free time to seek counsel in the Scriptures, but this had proved inadequate. These experiences eventually compelled Augustine to admit that he needed a time of spiritual therapy through scriptural mediation and prayer. His problem was not so much that he lacked sufficient knowledge of the doctrine of the Church, but that he was in want of the skills to administer the truth to others, so that it might serve their salvation. Augustine felt the need to study 'the medicines of [God's] Scriptures' (*scripturarum eius medicamenta*) and to pray to God in order to be inwardly strengthened by them for his ministry.[206] So he asks Valerius for a time of sabbatical to study the Scriptures and to pray to God.[207]

In order to convince Valerius of the urgency of his request, Augustine refers to the day of judgement, when he will have to give an account to Christ about his care for the Church. He will not be able to excuse himself by saying that he was too much engrossed in the affairs of the Church and therefore could not take recourse to the medicaments of Scripture.[208] Christ will judge him a wicked servant, as the spiritual care for his flock needs priority over the care for temporal concerns. By appealing to Christ's coming judgement over him, Augustine puts the recently discovered problem of his soul into an eternal perspective. It is Christ's future judgement over his office bearers that makes Augustine's need for spiritual healing so pressing. He has to give an account to Christ of how he has acquitted himself of the task his master has given him, and he will not be allowed to excuse himself for his failings if he has refused to make use of the medicaments his master himself provided him.

This is why Augustine beseeches Valerius 'by the goodness and severity of Christ'. Christ makes Augustine aware of his shortcomings and his future judgement over Augustine's care for the Church. This is his severity. This severity aims, however, to compel Augustine to seek the cure for his soul in the soothing medicines of Scripture. This is Christ's goodness. Along this way, accompanied by the prayers of Valerius, Augustine writes with confidence, 'He will give me back to you, perhaps, within a period shorter than I have craved, thoroughly furnished for His service by the profitable counsels of his Scriptures.'[209]

[206] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 135; Allen D. Fitzgerald ('When Augustine Was Priest', *Augustinian Studies* 40/1 (2009), 44) argues that it was especially the turmoil caused by Donatism in Hippo that made his presbyteral responsibilities so burdensome.

[207] *ep.* 21 does not imply that Augustine asked Valerius for a time of study before he was ordained, as is often assumed. He already seems to have experienced the hardships of being a priest ('living among iniquitous men') and now requests study time from Valerius in order to cope better with the difficulties of his office. Cf. V. H. Drecoll, 'Augustins Bittschreiben an Valerius (Ep. 21)', *Augustiniana* 56 (2006), 223–33 (232–3).

[208] *ep.* 21,5, CSEL 34,1,52: '*Quid enim responsurus sum Domino iudici: Non poteram ista iam quaerere, cum ecclesiasticis negotiis impedirer*?'

[209] *ep.* 21,6, CSEL 34,1,54: '*Fortassis breviore tempore quam postulaui, me saluberrimis consiliisde Scripturis suis reddet instructum*.'

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have followed the thought of Augustine from the time after his baptism until his forced ordination in 391. In this conclusion I will sum up and connect the most important findings of this chapter on the question: what is the soteriological function of God's judgement of sin?

The Pedagogical Function of the Punishment of the First Sin

In the writings that Augustine produced during his time in Rome and Thagaste, he begins to discuss God's judgement of sin in the context of the fall and its consequences. The theme of divine pedagogy through the fear or suffering of punishment becomes embedded in the biblical story of creation, fall, and redemption. In his polemics with the Manichees, Augustine stresses that humanity's entanglement in habit and its liability to death are not to be explained as the consequences of the divine soul's entrapment in matter, but rather as punishments for the first sin (and for subsequent sins). In line with other Church Fathers, Augustine regards Manichaean dualism as a form of self-justification. Manichees exculpate their own souls by declaring them equal to their highest god, and accuse the true God, the maker of bodies, of being the source of their soul's miserable situation. Augustine argues that the true danger of Manichaean dualism lies in its making the soul deaf to the message of divine punishment, as it is exactly through bodily suffering that God addresses man.[210]

In opposition to the Manichaean explanation of suffering, Augustine stresses that man's suffering is the effect of his Edenic fall, which was a free choice to leave his middle state between God and corporeal creation, in order to establish his own beatitude through bodily action. Though he was created to merit eternal beatitude by remaining in a state of contemplation, he nonetheless opted to leave the inner light of truth and started to search for truth in the world of time and change. In response, God punished man for the transgression of his law. Man no longer rules over the animal soul and the physical body, but these started to dominate him and denied him being nourished by the intelligible delights for which his soul was created.

In line with other anti-dualist theologians such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Augustine stresses that man's exclusion from paradise had a pedagogical purpose. Through suffering, man should experience his soul's

[210] Although the Manichees did exercise a rite of confession, it was rather a means to return to the self, than a way of confessing guilt to a personal God. Cf. H. C. Puech, *Sur le Manichéisme et autres essais* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979), 178.

alienation from God and be admonished to return. Augustine depicts bodily creation as a law that accuses man, commanding him to mortify the desires of the flesh, in order to regain his position of dominion over the body. Augustine also observes that these external admonitions do not suffice to return man to paradise. The fear of death can at most have a deterring effect (cf. *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,42), but it does not heal man inwardly, entangled as he is in malicious habits. He needs the illumination of an inward teacher and the love of the Holy Spirit to be converted and purified. Augustine does not yet explicitly address the question of to what extent human free will is engaged in this process. On the basis of *De libero arbitrio* 1 and his general expectations of ascent, it seems likely that Augustine at least regards the *desire* to be saved as arising from the human will. In this regard he clearly echoes the traditional anti-Manichaean concern for the freedom of the will in the process of divine *paideia*.

The Function and Form of Divine Judgement in Salvation History

The pedagogical function of punishment recurs in Augustine's concept of salvation history. He develops two themes that he had already addressed in the Cassiciacum Dialogues: accommodation and coercion. Christ accommodated himself to humans by assuming a mortal body and performing miracles to catch the attention of carnal people, in order to lead them upwards to spiritual realities. That this accommodation could assume the form of coercion became clear from Augustine's own pedagogical practice: the threat of temporal punishment (through the recording of mistakes) restrained the evil inclinations of his pupils.

Augustine comes to use these categories to explain the difference between the Old and the New Testament. Against the Manichees, he emphasizes that the Testaments are two forms of one divine project of human instruction. In both the Old and New Testament, God aimed at the same goal: the cure of the soul from its 'irrational love'. The Testaments differ, however, in the way God administers his discipline. As a good doctor he adapts his art of healing to the different diseases of the soul. In the Old Testament, the time in which God's people were still carnal, God binds his people to himself through a temporal law with earthly threats and promises. Obedience is rewarded with earthly blessing, disobedience with temporal punishment. Thus he domesticated 'the old man' in the people of Israel, coercing them to a certain degree of obedience through fear of punishment. However, this coercion did not free them from their real malady, the desire to sin. The great breakthrough comes with Christ, who is able to set man free from slavery to the senses. Because of this liberating power, he does not coerce his people to obedience, but rather can teach them

through the example of his life and death. Augustine applies this distinction between the Old and the New Testament also to the life of the individual believer. The transition from the Old to the New Testament signifies what happens in every conversion. If one intends to foster the conversion of one's neighbour, one should seek first to inspire him with the fear of God and then with the love of God. A person should be convinced that God punishes sins and develop a carnal fear of God, in order to grow towards a chaste fear, that is the fear of sinning itself. It is this chaste fear that motivates the new man to mortify his evil desires. He uses his reverence for God's justice to promote his growth in virtue. With regard to man's use of the moral law after conversion, we observed that Augustine still works within the paradigm of ascent, in which the Christian soul uses the law to purify itself gradually from the stains of sin.

In this context we tested the hypothesis of Brown and Cranz that coercion through temporal punishment no longer applies in the time of the New Testament, because of the Church's spiritual ascent through time. I concluded that Augustine indeed characterizes the Old Testament as the time of fear, and the New Testament as the dispensation of love, but that this distinction is not absolute. In both dispensations the Church is a mixed body, consisting of spiritual and carnal people. They continue to stand in need of correction, which is to be adapted to their differing diseases. What has changed, however, is the way in which the people of God are ruled. The Old Testament Church was a typological nation-state, ruled by civil authority. This no longer applies to the New Testament Church. Here discipline is primarily exercised by the word and the announcement of the final judgement.

However, Augustine's early thought allows room for the idea that God uses the laws of the civil government in the service of church discipline. Just as God inflicts temporal punishments for the healing of sin through his general providence, there is room in Augustine's thought for the belief that God also makes use of temporal rulers in the service of church discipline. In this period of his career, however, this is not yet an issue for Augustine, although he does argue in *De libero arbitrio* 1 that temporal rulers should mould their temporal laws to the eternal law. This Platonic concept could easily be applied in a Christian context in favour of state support of the Christian religion.

Augustine's Personal Experience of Divine Discipline

The final section of this chapter addressed Augustine's own experience of punishment, when he was ordained a priest against his will. At Cassiciacum we witnessed him being punished in the process of ascent, because he had misjudged the ability of his own soul to contemplate God. Something similar returns in the context of his forced ordination. Again Augustine's pride is the

problem. He had allowed himself to believe that he was more advanced in virtue than the ecclesiastical office bearers whom he saw struggling with their task of congregational leadership. Through his forced ordination, however, Augustine is confronted with the real state of his soul, as his responsibilities force him to acknowledge his own difficulties in serving the ordinary believers who compose Valerius' congregation. Through the force of his ecclesiastical responsibilities, God shows Augustine the remaining illness of his soul, thus compelling him to abandon his pride and seek healing in the 'medicines of Scripture'.

4

Reappropriating Paul and Exercising Discipline

Augustine during his Presbyterate (391–397)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will follow Augustine's thought on the redemptive meaning of God's judgement during the period of his priesthood. His thought on this subject developed under the influence of both his ongoing engagement with the text of the Bible, especially with Paul,[1] the polemical challenges that Manichaeism and Donatism posed to him,[2] and the pastoral problems that arose in his congregation and religious community.

After a short note on Augustine's reappropriation of Paul in this period, the first main section of this chapter addresses Augustine's understanding of the penal consequences of the first sin in his controversy with Manichaeism. Augustine continues his preceding thought on this matter. He emphasizes the detrimental consequences of sin for both soul and body, but upholds the freedom of will in the process of salvation. His ongoing engagement with Paul finally leads him to deny that sin has left man any freedom to turn to God. Humanity is a *massa peccati,* bound to the penalty of eternal death, unless God graciously intervenes.

The second section of this chapter addresses Augustine's understanding of the law in its relation to grace. It first describes the soteriological function of the law of nature. Then it addresses Augustine's developing understanding of the Old Testament law. It argues that Augustine's view of the function of the

[1] Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul*, 80.

[2] Lancel, *St. Augustine*, 150: 'The Manicheans prospered at Hippo under Fortunatus.' On Augustine's experience with Donatism in Hippo during the time of this priesthood, see Alan Fitzgerald, 'When Augustine was Priest', 37–48. The most important sources that testify to Augustine's engagement with the Donatists during this period are *Epistula* 23, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 10, and *Psalmus contra Partem Donati.*

law changes in connection with his doctrine of grace. From a pedagogue who prepares his pupils for the Teacher, it becomes the pedagogue who prepares his pupils for the Mediator of righteousness. This changing function of the law is connected to a development in Augustine's understanding of the work of Christ. Augustine comes to understand Christ's death on the cross as a representative bearing of the punishment of sin, which liberates those who believe in him from the curse of the law. A final section addresses the question of what these changes imply for Augustine's understanding of the function of divine judgement in the life under grace.

The third section addresses Augustine's developing understanding of church discipline. The first subsection addresses his thought on fraternal correction. The second focuses on the disciplinary regime in Augustine's religious community, as attested in the rule that he wrote around 397. The third subsection takes up the question that was posed in Chapter 3, concerning the use of corporeal punishment in the time of the New Testament. We observed that Augustine would not reject coercion by force on the basis of a moral progress inherent to the Church itself. Rejection of the use of political means of church discipline is solely based upon the fact that the Church finds itself in the salvation-historical situation of living between the temporal, sacramental kingdom of Israel and the eternal kingdom of Christ. This subsection seeks to identify to what extent Augustine, in this period of his career, reflects upon the question of whether there is room for an alliance between Church and state in the time between Christ's ascension and his second coming. The final part of this section addresses Augustine's own disciplinary activity as a presbyter in his congregation.

AUGUSTINE THE PRESBYTER AND MANICHAEISM: RECLAIMING PAUL

As a presbyter, Augustine continued his polemics with his former co-religionists. The distinctive feature of his anti-Manichaean polemic as a presbyter was its increasingly Pauline character.[3] As Décret has pointed out, the Manichees amply, though not exclusively, used the letters of Paul to support their substantialist view of evil, and their negative view of the Old Testament. They interpreted the

[3] This does not mean that Augustine had not read Paul before his ordination. Already as a Manichaean auditor he had read him and Paul had been of decisive importance for his conversion. Augustine's literary activity right after his conversion already shows a thorough engagement with Paul's writings. His rereading of Paul in the 390s, however, led to a deepening of Pauline influence on his thought, especially with regard to themes such as sin and grace.

Pauline battle between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:17) dualistically as a war between two ontological principles. Further, they identified the law of sin and death, of which Paul speaks in Romans 7, with the law of Moses, through which the power of darkness tried to hold fallen souls bound to their bodies. In order to hold them in captivity to himself, the prince of darkness invented the material observances of the Old Testament, and imposed them on the Jewish people. Christ set his people free from the dominion of this law by revealing to them that they currently suffer under the onslaught of the contrary nature, and teaching them to separate themselves from their attachment to the body and to live according to their 'good soul' (*anima bona*). For the Manichees, the law of Moses stands in the service of evil, because it comes from the devil himself and can therefore never exercise a positive function in the history of redemption.[4]

In an ecclesial context, in which the Bible was the decisive source of authority, Augustine had to reclaim Paul from the Manichees in order to defend Catholic doctrine in a credible way.[5] This is what we see him doing in his polemic with Fortunatus and in his commentaries on Romans (including *Ad Simplicianum*) and Galatians. He tries to interpret Paul's discourse on the battle between flesh and spirit in a non-dualist way, and he seeks to relate the Old Testament law positively to the work of Christ. Christ is the one who both brought the reality of the shadows of the law, and bore the curse of the law on the cross. The liberation that Christ brings is not so much a liberation from, but rather a fulfilment of the Old Testament law.

In the following sections I will address Augustine's anti-Manichaean interpretation of Paul concerning human sin and the freedom of the will, and with regard to the relationship between the Old Testament law and Christ. With regard to the first issue, I will argue that Augustine remains consistent with his earlier writings. The absolute *facilitas* to know and to do the good was lost in Adam. Nonetheless, man remains a rational being, who still has the freedom to know and to will his moral obligations, but he lacks the power to fulfil them.[6] This position, however, changes in *Ad Simplicianum*. With regard to the second issue (the relationship between the law and Christ), I will focus on Augustine's interpretion of the law as a pedagogue to Christ.

[4] F. Décret, 'L'Utilisation des épîtres de Paul chez les Manichéens d'Afrique', in Décret, *Essais sur l'Église manichéene en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de Augustin: recueil d'études* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1995), 55–105 (80–104).

[5] M. G. Mara, 'Agostino e la polemica antimanichea: il ruolo di Paolo e del suo epistolario', *Augustinianum* 32/1 (1992), 119–44; Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul*, 105; BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 2, 192–238; Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 206; Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 146, 198 who contends on the basis of particular characteristics of Augustine's exegesis of Romans and Galatians (especially his appeal to free will and the positive function of the law) that his turn to Paul was not an accidental by-product of his ordination, but caused by anti-Manichaean polemical concerns.

[6] Karfikova, *Grace and the Will according to Augustine*, 63–5.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FIRST SIN

The Compulsive Power of Evil according to the Manichees

Before turning to Augustine's anti-Manichaean polemic on sin and free will, it is helpful to first describe more precisely the Manichaean account of evil to which Augustine responded. For this purpose I take my starting point in Fortunatus' theodicy, as expounded in *Contra Fortunatum*. This dialogue offers the very own words of the Manichaean priest Fortunatus, who was highly influential in Hippo at the time of Augustine.[7]

In its account of the origin of evil in the world, Manichaeism contends for the innocence of God. According to the Manichees, the Catholic theodicy cannot avoid making God the author of sin. If one contends, as the Catholics do, that sin comes from a human being or an angel and that these creatures come from God as their maker, then God is in some sense responsible for sin.[8] Manichaeism's interest, then, is to defend the innocence of God with regard to evil. Evil cannot arise from God and therefore neither from souls that have originated from Him (*ex eo sint*), for this would imply that God produces evil things.[9] Consequently, Manichaeism has to deny either the existence of evil, or the omnipotence of God. It does the latter. It argues that evil is an autonomous substance, associated with matter, which set out to attack God's kingdom. In response, God had to defend himself against the rebellion of evil and did so by sacrificing a part of himself—his power (*uirtus*)—to evil's greed. This world was fashioned from this power's mingling with evil. Human souls are to be seen as parts of God, which are enslaved to and corrupted by matter,[10] and in need of a deliverer to purify them from error and to release them from the mingling with the evil substance.[11]

[7] François Décret, *Aspects du Manichéisme dans l'Afrique Romaine: les controverses de Fortunatus, Faustus et Felix avec saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1970), 39.

[8] *duab. an.* 10, CSEL 25,1,63: '*Hic fortasse quis dicat: unde ipsa peccata et omnino unde malum? Si ab homine, unde homo? Si ab angelo, unde angelus? Quos ex deo esse cum dicitur, quamuis recte uereque dicantur, uidentur tamen inperitis et minus ualentibus acriter res abditas intueri quasi per quandam catenam ad deum mala et peccata conecti.*' Cf. *c. Fort.* 20; *lib. arb.* 1,2,4–5 .

[9] *c. Fort.* 20.

[10] Cf. *c. Fort.* 14, CSEL 25,1,91 where Fortunatus explicitly associates the *contraria natura* with the body: '*Duae sunt substantiae in hoc mundo, quae speciebus et nominibus distant: quarum est una corporis, alia uero aeterna, patris omnipotentis quam esse credimus.*'

[11] *c. Fort.* 1, CSEL 25,1,83–4: '*Dicitis enim aliam nescio quam gentem tenebrarum aduersus dei regnum rebellasse; deum autem omnipotentem cum uideret, quanta labes et uastitas inmineret regnis suis, nisi aliquid aduersae genti obponeret et ei resisteret, misisse hanc uirtutem, de cuius commixtione cum malo et tenebrarum gente mundus sit fabricatus; hinc esse, quod hic animae bonae laborant, seruiunt, errant, corrumpuntur, ut necessarium haberent liberatorem, qui eas ab errore purgaret et a commixtione solueret et a seruitute liberaret.*' *c. Fort.* 1, CSEL 25,1,84: '*. . . ista principalia sunt fidei nostrae.*' Augustine's summary is approved of by Fortunatus as an adequate expression of Manichaean teaching. As Manichaeism speaks about the evil principle as having intelligence and will, Augustine calls it a soul (*anima*), a term the Manichees themselves did not

According to Fortunatus, the principles of good and evil, darkness and light, penetrate the entire universe. Over against Augustine's monist idea that the universe has been created good by the Triune God, Fortunatus argues that all the contrarities in the world suggest a dualist origin. He contends that the world as we now know it was brought into existence through a command (*iussio*) of the good God, but that this act itself was a reaction to the assault of the kingdom of darkness on the kingdom of light. This resulted in an intermingling of two opposing principles. Fortunatus states:

> From the facts themselves it is evident that darkness and light are not at all alike, that the truth and a lie are not at all alike, that death and life ar not at all alike, that soul and body are not at all alike . . . And our Lord was right to say: The tree that my heavenly father has not planted will be uprooted (*Mt.* 15:13), because it does not bear good fruit (*Mt.* 3:10), and there is also the tree that he has planted. Hence, it is very clear from the nature of things that there are two substances in this world, which differ in their appearances and names; one of these is that of the body, but the other is eternal, which we believe is the substance of the almighty Father.[12]

The root of all evils (*radix omnium malorum*), Fortunatus argues, is therefore not a free choice of the will, as Augustine presumes, but the opposing nature (*contraria natura*), the tree that the Father has not planted.[13] When the apostle Paul defines cupiditas as the root of all evils (1 Tim. 6:10), this should not be read as referring to a vice that only dwells in our hearts,[14] but to the author of evil himself, whose influence extends throughout the whole world. The evil soul at work in us is only a branch of this large tree of evil.[15]

Fortunatus considers his recourse to an active evil nature the best explanation for the evil that we do, because of the fact that we find ourselves doing it against our wills.[16] Contrary to Augustine, who explains this phenomenon as the punishment of a voluntary sin, Fortunatus holds that 'if the soul were

use. Cf. *duab. an.* 16, CSEL 25,1,71: '*Duo animarum genera esse dicunt: unum bonum, quod ita ex deo sit, ut non ex aliqua materia uel ex nihilo ab eo factum, sed de ipsa eius omnino substantia pars quaedam processisse dicatur; alterum autem malum, quod nulla prorsus ex parte ad deum pertinere credunt credendumque commendant.*'

[12] *c. Fort.* 14, CSEL 25,1,83: '*Ceterum rebus ipsis paret, quia nihil simile tenebrae et lux, nihil simile ueritas et mendacium, nihil simile mors et uita, nihil simile anima et corpus et cetera istis similia, quae et nominibus et speciebus distant ab inuicem, et merito dixisse dominum nostrum: arbor, quam non plantauit pater meus caelestis, eradicabitur [Mt. 15,13] et in ignem mittetur, quae non adferet fructus bonos [Mt. 3,10], et esse arborem radicatam. Hinc uero constat et ratione rerum, quod duae sunt substantiae in hoc mundo, quae speciebus et nominibus distant: quarum est una corporis, alia uero aeterna, patris omnipotentis quam esse credimus*' (translation: WSA 1/19, 149).

[13] *c. Fort.* 21.

[14] Fortunatus represents Augustine's position as 'the root of all evil is the evil that dwells in us' (*radix omnium malorum est malum quod in nobis versatur*). Augustine, however, said that the root of evil is not so much the evil that dwells in us, but the evil that arises from a free choice of the will.

[15] *c. Fort.* 21.

[16] *c. Fort.* 20, CSEL 25,1,99: '*Quia inuiti peccamus et cogimur a contraria et inimica nobis substantia, idcirco sequimur scientiam rerum.*'

situated in a body alone without any opposing nature, it would be without sin and would not make itself subject to sin'.[17] Therefore, before the enlightenment by Christ the Saviour, who enables the divine soul to separate itself from the opposing nature, all evil that we do is done in us by the opposing nature.[18] To substantiate his conviction from Scripture, Fortunatus appeals to three Pauline texts: Rom. 8:7 (*prudentia carnis inimica sit Deo; legi enim Dei non est subiecta, nec enim potest*), Gal. 5:17 (*caro concupiscit aduersus spiritum et spiritus aduersus carnem. Ut non quaecumque uultis, illa faciatis*), and Rom. 7:23 (*uideo aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae et captiuum me ducentem in legem peccati et mortis*).[19] These texts show, according to Fortunatus, that the good soul does not sin of its own accord (*sua sponte*), but by the action of that power which is not subject to the law of God, the *contraria natura*.

Compulsion as Punishment: The Development of Augustine's Thought until 394

In his response to the Manichees, Augustine intends to reconcile human responsibility and the experience of compulsive willing. This subsection discusses how Augustine does this in *De duabus animabus* and *Contra Fortunatum* (the two earliest anti-Manichaean texts after his ordination to the priesthood) and passages from other works that Augustine composed after these tractates. We will see that the presence of Paul in Augustine's thinking becomes more dominant. However, until *Ad Simplicianum*, this does not lead to substantial changes in his thinking in comparison to the period before his ordination.

Augustine takes his point of departure in the doctrine of creation. According to Augustine's ontology, God has created everything out of nothing through his Word and Wisdom.[20] However, not everything that has been created has the same level of being. Creation is hierarchically layered, from spiritual to material substances. These substances are all good in their own kind, but have different types of being. Within this hierarchy, the soul is the highest substance under God the Creator. From these presuppositions Augustine argues that the evil soul cannot be completely evil, because it possesses life, movement, and immortality, all of which it owes to God the Creator. Hence, the evil soul also must have been created by God, that is to say, insofar as it is a good substance, not insofar as it is evil. Here Augustine

[17] *c. Fort.* 20, CSEL 25,1,99: '*Si sola uersatur anima in corpore constituta, cui deus, ut dicis, liberum arbitrium dedit, sine peccato esset nec peccatis se obnoxium faceret*' (translation: WSA 1/19, 155).

[18] *c. Fort.* 21.

[19] For the use of these texts by Fortunatus, see further François Decret, 'L'Utilisation des épîtres de Paul chez les Manichéens d'Afrique', in *Essais sur l'Église manichéenne*, 86–8.

[20] *duab. an.* 12–13; *c. Fort.* 16.

introduces the distinction between a substance and the corruption or defect that exists in a substance.[21] The soul might be corrupted through vice, but nonetheless it remains more excellent than any material substance, like the light of the sun and the moon worshipped by the Manichees, because the soul belongs to the highest layer of created reality.[22]

However, this distinction between substance and the defect in a substance gives rise to the Manichaean question as to how this defect came to dwell in the soul. Augustine responds to this question by referring to the free choice of the will. The only way in which the soul can fall away from the knowledge of God and die is because it chooses this path of its own accord.[23] Sin should therefore be defined as an act that is done without compulsion: 'Sin . . . is the will to retain and follow after what justice forbids and from which it is free to abstain.'[24] This explanation of sin as a free act of the will is indispensable for Augustine, as only in this way can the judicial relationship between God and the soul be upheld. If the soul's alienation from God is not the result of the free choice of the will, but is in some sense compulsory, all religion crumbles to dust.[25] This would imply that the soul cannot be held responsible for its deeds, that there is no ground for punishment, reward, or pardon, and that the repentance of sins is senseless.[26] Moreover, it would imply that creation is ruled by change, rather than by divine providence, for in that case the destiny of souls is not dependent upon their merits, but on the uncertain outcome of the battle between good and evil.[27] Augustine therefore regards Manichaeism as a form of fatalism.[28] Over against Manichaeism Augustine argues that the relationship between God and man has a juridical character. God deals with man according to the merits of the human will. Man is obliged to nourish himself with spiritual things and rule over the sensible. He merits eternal life if he obeys this law, but will suffer the punishment of misery if he does not obey it.[29] The disobedient soul becomes subject to the things over which it was set to rule.[30]

[21] *duab. an.* 9. [22] *duab. an.* 4. [23] *duab. an.* 10.

[24] *duab. an.* 15, CSEL 25,1,70: '*Ergo peccatum est uoluntas retinendi uel consequendi quod iustitia uetat et unde liberum est abstinere.*'

[25] *duab. an.* 17. Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 90; BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 2, 117.

[26] Cf. *uera rel.* 27.

[27] *duab. an.* 17, CSEL 25,1,73: '*Postremo ut nihil horum laudandorum habeant illae animae, quae illorum rationibus habere coguntur, quaererem, utrum aliquas an nullas animas deus damnet: si nullas, nullum meritorum iudicium est, nulla prouidentia, et casu potius quam ratione mundus administratur uel potius non administratur; non enim administratio casibus danda est.*'

[28] D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 2, 119, 229.

[29] *c. Fort.* 21, CSEL 25,1,100: '*Ego dico peccatum non esse, si non propria uoluntate peccatur; hinc esse et praemium, quia propria uoluntate recta facimus. Aut si poenam meretur, qui peccat inuitus, debet et praemium mereri, qui bene facit inuitus. Quis autem, qui dubitet non deferri praemium nisi ei, qui aliquid bona uoluntate fecerit? Ex quo intellegimus et poenam inferri ei, qui uoluntate mala aliquid fecerit.*' Cf. *lib. arb.* 1,30; *c. Fort.* 15 and *duab. an.* 10.

[30] *c. Fort.* 15; *c. Fort.* 20; *Gn. litt. imp.* 1,3, CSEL 28,1,460.

But do humans still have the freedom to fulfil the divine law on their own strength? In his *Retractationes* (427) Augustine denies that he ever intended to imply this in *De duabus animabus*. He argues that when he said that sin is an uncompelled choice of the will,[31] he was speaking of Adam and Eve in the situation before the fall. They were completely free to abstain from what justice forbids. They knew the good and had the willpower to act accordingly, but let themselves be persuaded by the devil to act against God's commandment.[32] After the first sin, the will acts under the compulsion of evil desire (*cupiditas/concupiscentia*). This means that it does not have the inherent ability to choose the good, either because it does not know the good, or because it does not have the strength to resist the evil desires that dominate it.[33] Nonetheless, one cannot be said to sin without the will, as one consents to the evil desire with the will. Therefore, after the fall, the expression 'sin is nowhere but in the will'[34] still applies, although this sin is also the punishment of sin. [35]

Does Augustine explain himself convincingly here? I think that he does. As we observed, Augustine took his point of departure in the doctrine of creation. In the first part of *De duabus animabus*, he discussed the human soul and its free will from the perspective of its originally created integrity. In *de duabus animabus* 19, Augustine turns to the soul's present experience of moral deliberation. In its present situation it suffers from the effects of the fall. Augustine observes that we, as we are presently constituted (*nunc constituti sumus*), can be affected by lust through the flesh and by virtue through the spirit.[36] As a consequence, the soul experiences a fluctuation between good and evil choices. The soul experiences delight in the lust of the flesh (*illud libet*), whereas it knows that it should choose what is fitting (*hoc decet*).[37] This fluctuation is not a struggle between two opposing principles, as the Manichees have it, but a conflict within the human will itself. It experiences internal division.[38] Augustine explains this experience as an effect of the fall:

> It has been made difficult for us to abstain from carnal things, whereas our truest bread is spiritual. For with great labor we now eat this bread. For neither without punishment for the sin of transgression have we been changed from immortal into mortal. So it happens, that when we strive after better things, and habits

[31] *retr.* 1,15,4 (*duab. an.* 15). [32] *retr.* 1,15,3. [33] *retr.* 1,15,3.
[34] *duab. an.* 14. [35] *retr.* 1,15,2–4.
[36] *duab. an.* 19, CSEL 25,1,75: '*Ita enim nunc constituti sumus, ut et per carnem uoluptate adfici et per spiritum honestate possimus*.' As observed in Chapter 3, Augustine perceives of the pre-lapsarian man as a soul that rules the body, and does not receive any impulses from the body.
[37] *duab. an.* 19, CSEL 25,1,75: '*Nam mihi cum accidit, unum me sentio utrumque considerantem alterutrum eligentem; sed plerumque illud libet, hoc decet, quorum nos in medio positi fluctuamus*.'
[38] *duab. an.* 19, CSEL 25,1,75: '*Cur non magis hoc signum est unius animae, quae libera illa uoluntate huc et huc ferri, hinc atque hinc referri potest*?' Augustine's use of *libera uoluntas* in this context does not refer to the religious freedom of the will, but to its capability to move itself. Cf. *diu. qu.* 40.

> formed by connection with the flesh and our sins in some way begin to militate against us and put obstacles in our way, some foolish persons with most obtuse superstition suspect that there is another kind of soul which is not from God.[39]

Against the Manichees, Augustine thus explains the experience of internal division and compulsion from the fall and its consequences. The human will now acts under the conditions of mortality, so that it feels attracted by the desires of the flesh, and develops carnal habits (*consuetudo facta cum carne*), which start to draw the will back when it wants to return to God. This description of the present condition of the human will agrees with Augustine's explanation of his own words in the *Retractationes.* From the perspective of creation, the will was free to abstain from what justice forbids, but after the fall it only wills under the burden of mortality and thus becomes implicated in habit and comes to experience moral difficulty. As it is the same human being who sinned and at present acts under the penal consequences of this sin, he remains responsible for his actions.[40] Augustine does not explicate in this passage to what extent man is able to cooperate in the process of overcoming *difficultas*. The preceding and following works suggest, however, that Augustine still regards the will as free to a certain extent to will its own salvation.

In *Contra Fortunatum* Augustine develops his understanding of compulsive willing in response to his interlocutor's use of Pauline texts to support the theory of the opposing nature at work in us (Rom. 8:7; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:23–25a).[41] These texts clearly suggest that man somehow sins against his will. Augustine harmonizes this idea with human free will by differentiating between man before and after the fall: 'I say that there was free exercise of will in that man who was first formed. He was so made that absolutely nothing could resist his will, if he had willed to keep the precepts of God. But after he voluntarily sinned, we who have descended from his stock were plunged into necessity (*praecipitati in necessitatem*).'[42] In this sentence, Augustine limits absolute freedom of the will to the first man, and sees his offspring as acting

[39] *duab. an.* 19, CSEL 25,1,75: '*Sed factum est nobis difficile a carnalibus abstinere, cum panis uerissimus noster spiritalis sit. cum labore namque nunc comedimus panem. Neque enim nullo in supplicio sumus peccato transgressionis mortales ex inmortalibus facti. Eo contingit, ut cum ad meliora conantibus nobis consuetudo facta cum carne et peccata nostra quodam modo militare contra nos et difficultatem nobis facere coeperint, nonnulli stulti aliud genus animarum, quod non sit ex deo, superstitione obtunsissima suspicentur*' (translation: WSA 1/19, 132).

[40] Humanity's present condition is '*voluntaria in causa*'. See *duab. an.* 12. I derive this term from R. J. O'Connell, '"Involuntary Sin" in *de libero arbitrio*', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 37 (1991), 23–36 (29).

[41] According to Alflatt, 'Development', 131, Augustine is confronted here for the first time with a Pauline argument for Manichaean dualism. In Chapter 3 we have seen that Augustine already addressed Rom. 7:25 in *De musica*. In other words, Fortunatus' appeal to this text did not come as a surprise. For an extensive treatment of the dialogue, see BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 2, 122–63.

[42] *c. Fort.* 22, CSEL 125,1,103–4: '*Liberum uoluntatis arbitrium in illo homine fuisse dico, qui primus formatus est. Ille sic factus est, ut nihil omnino uoluntati eius resisteret, si uellet dei*

under necessity. But what does Augustine mean by the word *necessitas*? Does he mean that humanity necessarily sins because of Adam's sin; or does *necessitas*, as some scholars suggest, merely refer to the mortality of the body, which makes it difficult not to sin?[43]

In the sentence that follows, Augustine confuses the reader even more. He appeals to everyday experience to illustrate that we have been plunged into the necessity by Adam's sin: 'Each of us can discover after a little reflection that what I say is true. For at present (*hodie*), before we become entangled in some habit, we have in our actions the free choice of doing or not doing something. But after we have done something with this freedom and the deadly sweetness and pleasure of the action has taken hold of the soul, the soul is so entangled in that same habit of its own making that afterwards it cannot conquer what it fashioned for itself by sinning.'[44] Subsequently, Augustine refers to the Manichaean habit of swearing by the Paraclete. His interlocutor will experience that, if he decides to stop swearing, the 'habit made with the flesh' (*consuetudo facta cum carne*) will start to oppose the good will. This habit is what Paul calls 'the wisdom of the flesh that cannot be subject to the law of God' (Rom. 8:7), and the 'flesh that lusts against the spirit' (Gal. 5:17). It is not a nature, but a disposition of the soul that is formed by repetitive sinful choices. Malcolm Alflatt has rightly asked how this appeal to our everyday experience of habit explains anything about the relationship between Adam's sin and his progeny's necessity to sin.[45] Augustine's use of the word *hodie* might provide a clue to the answer. By this word Augustine distinguishes our present situation from that of Adam. Just like him, before we become entangled in some habit, we have *liberum arbitrium* to choose between good and evil. But unlike him, Augustine suggests, doing something with this freedom inevitably leads to sinful acts and the consequent development of habit.[46] Somehow, free will is so predisposed that it inevitably falls into sin and develops compulsive habits.

praecepta seruare. Postquam autem libera ipse uoluntate peccauit, nos in necessitatem praecipitati sumus, qui ab eius stirpe descendimus' (translation: WSA 1/19, 157).

[43] The first interpretation is defended by Alflatt, 'Development', 129. For the second interpretation, see Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul,* 78; Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte*, 268. *Necessitas* does not need to refer to a necessity that is inherent to the will itself, but can also refer to something external that exercises influence upon the will, but does not have the power to move it. Cf. *s.* 112,8, RB 76,54: '*Foris inueniatur necessitas, nascetur intus uoluntas.*'

[44] *c. Fort.* 22, CSEL 125,1,104: '*Potest autem unusquisque nostrum mediocri consideratione inuenire uerum esse, quod dico. Hodie namque in actionibus nostris antequam consuetudine aliqua inplicemur, liberum habemus arbitrium faciendi aliquid uel non faciendi. Cum autem ista libertate fecerimus aliquid et facti ipsius tenuerit animam perniciosa dulcedo et uoluptas, eadem ipsa consuetudine sua sic inplicatur, ut postea uincere non possit, quod sibi ipsa peccando fabricata est*' (translation: WSA 1/19, 157).

[45] Alflatt, 'Development', 131.

[46] Paula Frederiksen (*Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul*, 78) argues that Augustine's idea of *necessitas* does not imply that we sin necessarily, but only that mortality has made it difficult for us to do the good. It is true that necessity does not imply here that we no longer enjoy

In the following part of the debate, Augustine confirms that he understands the human soul in its present situation as by nature enslaved to the passions of the flesh. He supports this conviction by using several quotations from Paul, which will later become the central texts of his doctrine of original sin.[47] He argues against Fortunatus that sin and the habit of the soul (*consuetudo animi*) have their origin in a free choice of the will of a nature created by God (1 Tim. 4:4). This nature appears to be the first man. In him humanity was created good, but through his choice they were made sinners. Augustine quotes Paul: 'Just as through the disobedience of the one many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one many were made righteous (Rom. 5:19). For just as death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also came through a man (1 Cor. 15:21). As long as we bear the image of the earthly man (1 Cor. 15:49), then, that is, as long as we live according to the flesh (Rom. 6:6), which is also called our old self, we experience the necessity of our habit so that we do not do what we will.'[48] Augustine suggests in this passage that humanity not only dies physically because of Adam, but also inherits a carnal soul from him. By nature we bear the image of the earthly man and live according to the flesh. When Adam sinned, he spiritually became earth and was therefore destined to return to the earth (Gen. 3:19). Those who are born from him suffer under the same sentence: 'We are born from him in this way [namely destined to die], because we are earth and we will return to the earth because of what the first man merited by his sin.'[49] Our being born mortal presupposes

free will, by which we choose to give in to the compulsion that the mortal body exercises upon the mind. The question, however, is whether Augustine thinks that this *liberum arbitrium* still has the power to resist sin and implication in habit. Although he asserts that we still possess the freedom to choose, he does not even consider the possibility that we can still make a use of it by which we avoid implication in habit. Augustine writes:

> 'When we have done something with this freedom (*fecerimus aliquid ista libertate*) and the pernicious sweetness and pleasure of the act itself has taken hold upon the mind (*et facti ipsius tenuerit animam perniciosa dulcedo et uoluptas*), by its own habit the mind is so implicated that afterwards it cannot conquer what by sinning it has fashioned for itself (*eadem ipsa consuetudine sua sic inplicatur, ut postea uincere non possit, quod sibi ipsa peccando fabricata est*)' (*c. Fort*. 22, CSEL 25,1,104).

[47] Rom. 5:19 (later connected to Rom. 5:12ff.) and 1 Cor. 15:21–2, to which Augustine already alluded in *Gn. adu. Man.* and *uera rel.* On Rom. 5 see Stanislaus Lyonnet, 'Romains 5:12 chez saint Augustin: note sur l'élaboration de la doctrine augustienne du péché originel', in *L'Homme devant Dieu: mélanges offerts au père Henri de Lubac*, vol. 1 (Aubier: Éditions Montaigne, 1963), 327–39.

[48] *c. Fort.* 22, CSEL 25,1,105: '*Sicuti per unius inobaudientiam peccatores constituti sunt multi, sic et per unius dicto audientiam iusti constituentur multi [Rm. 5,19], quoniam per hominem mors et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum [1 Cor. 15,21]. Quamdiu ergo portamus imaginem terreni hominis, id est quamdiu secundum carnem uiuimus, qui uetus etiam homo nominatur, habemus necessitatem consuetudinis nostrae, ut non quod uolumus faciamus.*'

[49] *c. Fort.* 22, CSEL 125,1,106: '*Ex ipso enim omnes sic nascimur, quia terra sumus, et in terram ibimus propter meritum peccati primi hominis.*'

the fallen nature of the soul, inherited from Adam.[50] When it comes to man's return to God, Augustine only mentions the working of divine grace through which the soul is freed from the *lex peccati* and comes to serve righteousness. Augustine does not express himself on the extent to which human free will is engaged in this process.

After *Contra Fortunatum,* Augustine continues to emphasize that we inherit a soul from Adam that drags man towards a life after the flesh. In *De Genesis ad litteram liber imperfectus* (393–4) Augustine repeats his definition of sin from *De duabus animabus*: 'Sin is the evil consent of free will, when we move towards the things that justice forbids and from which it is free to abstain.'[51] But he limits this freedom to Adam before the fall and describes our sinning before the intervention of grace as natural and necessary: 'Sins are called natural, which are necessarily committed before God has compassion [with us], after we have been plunged into this life by a sin of free choice.'[52] This understanding of the punishment for the sin of Adam also becomes clear from Augustine's use of Ephesians 2:3: 'At one time, we also, by nature were children of wrath'. In *Contra Adimantum* 21 (394), Augustine applies this text to 'the old life that we draw from Adam, so that what was voluntary in him, became natural in us.'[53] We currently act with our free will, but this will is predisposed by a fallen nature, which necessarily subjects the will to the law of sin. In this way Augustine reconciles compulsion and responsibility in his incipient appropriation of Paul against the Manichees. In these texts he does not pronounce himself as to what extent the will has any freedom of its own to turn to God.

De libero arbitrio (395/396)

In *De libero arbitrio* 3 Augustine systematizes his thought on human responsibility and the penal consequences of the first sin for Adam's offspring.[54]

[50] For Augustine's use of the word *terra* for the fallen soul, see *uera. rel.* 23.

[51] *Gn. litt. imp.* 1,3: '*Nec esse peccatum nisi prauum liberae uoluntatis adsensum, cum inclinamur ad ea quae iustitia uetat et unde liberum est abstinere*.'

[52] *Gn. litt. imp.* 1,3: '*Dici autem peccata naturalia, quae necesse est committi ante misericordiam dei, postquam in hanc uitam per peccatum liberi arbitrii lapsi sumus*.'

[53] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,180: '*Tali enim cruce uetus homo, id est uetus uita perimitur, quam de Adam traximus, ut quod in illo fuit uoluntarium, in nobis fieret naturale. quod ostendit apostolus dicens: fuimus et nos aliquando natura filii irae sicut et ceteri [Eph. 2,3]*.' Cf. *C. Adim.* 12, CSEL 25,1,141: '*Primus homo de terra terrenus; secundus homo de caelo caelestis. Qualis terrenus, tales et terreni, et qualis caelestis, tales et caelestes. Et quomodo induimus imaginem terreni, induamus et imaginem eius, qui de caelo est. Hoc autem dico, fratres, quia caro et sanguis regnum dei hereditate possidere non possunt neque corruptio incorruptionem hereditate possidebit [1 Cor. 15,39–50]*.'

[54] On the dating of the work, see S. Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will. The Theological and Philosophical Significance of De libero arbitrio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005),

Although Augustine emphasizes the detrimental consequences of the first sin on human knowledge and action, he upholds the present freedom of the will to call for divine help as an argument against the Manichees to uphold human responsibility.

At the end of book 3 of *De libero arbitrio* Augustine asks in what state man was first created. If man was created wise, how could he be seduced to sin? And if he was created foolish, how is God not the creator of vices, as foolishness is the greatest vice?[55] In response to these questions, Augustine argues that man was not created in a state of wisdom or folly, but rather in a middle state: he was not yet wise, but was able to acquire wisdom.[56] Man's goodness, Augustine argues against his opponents, consisted not so much in his possession of wisdom, but in his capacity to acquire it. He received reason so that he could understand God's commandments, and the ability (*posse*) to act according to his knowledge. From that moment man was a morally responsible being. He has the obligation to listen to God and to obey him and can rightly be charged if he refuses to do so.[57] By fulfilling this obligation man would merit the bestowal of wisdom, a fuller and eventually fulfilled union with God.[58] But if he refused to fulfil what he was able and obliged to do, man would justly be punished with the loss of the goods he received. If he did not pay his debt to God by doing what he ought to do, he would pay the penalty for disobedience by suffering.[59]

As Adam chose to listen to the suggestion of the devil in paradise and rebel against God's commandment, he had to pay the debt owed to divine justice.[60] He lost the knowledge of the truth and the power to act according to this knowledge, so that he would err against his will and act against his own interests. As Augustine has it in 3,52:

16–21. Harrison remarks that although Augustine composed the work in different stages—'*laicus coepi, presbyter terminaui*' (*perseu.* 12,30)—it is not clear how exactly the composition of the work took place. One should therefore be reluctant to regard *De libero arbitrio* as a book of three stages, which reflects a clear intellectual development. Augustine intended the work as a unitary composition.

[55] *lib. arb.* 3,71.

[56] Augustine adds that even if man was created with wisdom, it was still possible that he would choose against it, when confronted with an attractive enough alternative.

[57] *lib. arb.* 3,42. Augustine argues that a nature owes to God what it has received from him (this is implied in the sentence: *nemo autem debet quod non accepit*).

[58] *lib. arb.* 3,72; 3,74. In *lib. arb.* 3, 44 Augustine describes this reward as an increase of being (*esse*). If man uses his will rightly, he will increase in being, but if he refuses to do so, he decreases in being. This decrease of being is called *corruptio* or *defectus.* It is proper to the nature of non-rational beings, but in the case of man it is the result of a free choice of the will.

[59] *lib. arb.* 3,44, CSEL 74,126: '*Quia enim nemo superat leges omnipotentis creatoris, non sinitur anima non reddere debitum. Aut enim reddit bene utendo quod accepit aut reddit amittendo quod uti noluit bene. Itaque si non reddit faciendo iustitiam, reddet patiendo miseriam, quia in utroque uerbum illud debiti sonat hoc enim etiam modo dici potuit quod dictum est: si non reddet faciendo quod debet, reddet patiendo quod debet*' (translation: FC 59,206).

[60] *lib. arb.* 3,52.74.

> It is a perfectly just penalty for sin that man should forfeit what he would not put to good use when he could easily do so, if he were willing. That is to say, a man who fails to do what he knows is right, and a man who was unwilling to do what was right when he could, forfeits the power to do so when he wants to have it. These two punishments, ignorance and difficulty, are truly present in every soul that sins. Through ignorance, the soul is tainted with error; through difficulty, it suffers anguish. But to accept falsity for truth, so as to err unwillingly, and to be unable to refrain from lustful acts through the resistance of carnal habits, these are not of man's nature as he originally existed, but are a punishment of man inflicted after his condemnation.[61]

As a consequence of his pride, Adam lost the knowledge of the good and the power to act according to the divine law. Man thus has become divided against himself. He longs to know the truth and act accordingly, but as a punishment of his rebellion against God he has forfeited both of these goods.

This loss of the knowledge of the good and the power to do the good have become part and parcel of the souls of Adam's descendants. Augustine notices this when he observes that people do moral wrongs out of ignorance (*ignorantia*), or out of an inability to do what they want to do (*difficultas*).[62] For sins done out of ignorance, Augustine quotes 1 Tim. 1:13 and Ps. 25:7. For sins that arise from difficulty in acting according to one's knowledge of the good, Augustine quotes Rom. 7:18–19 and Gal. 5:17, texts that we already encountered in *Contra Fortunatum*. These are moral wrongs, but they cannot be counted as sins in the proper sense of the word, because we commit them against our wills. Neither can they be said to arise from our nature, and thus be good, for if that were the case, we would not disapprove of them. Augustine comes up with the solution that they are a punishment for the sin of Adam, in which we are implicated. 'It remains, then, that this is a just punishment springing from man's condemnation.'[63] The evil things that we do out of ignorance or difficulty are not so much sins in the proper sense of the word (committed by *liberum arbitrium* without compulsion), but the unavoidable effects of the first sin that was done voluntarily. We call them sins in the sense

[61] *lib. arb.* 3,52, CSEL 74,132: '*Enim peccati poena iustissima, ut amittat quisque quod bene uti noluit cum sine ulla posset difficultate si uellet; id est autem ut qui sciens recte non facit amittat scire quid rectum sit, et qui recte facere cum posset noluit amittat posse cum uelit. Nam sunt reuera omni peccanti animae duo ista poenalia, ignorantia et difficultas. Ex ignorantia dehonestat error, ex difficultate cruciatus adfligit. Sed adprobare falsa pro ueris ut erret inuitus, et resistente atque torquente dolore carnalis uinculi non posse a libidinosis operibus temperare, non est natura instituti hominis sed poena damnati*' (translation: FC 59,212).

[62] *lib. arb.* 3,51, CSEL 74,131: '*Et tamen etiam per ignorantiam facta quaedam inprobantur et corrigenda iudicantur . . . sunt etiam necessitate facta inprobanda, ubi uult homo recte facere et non potest.*'

[63] *lib. arb.* 3,51, CSEL 74,132: '*Relinquitur ergo ut haec poena iusta de damnatione hominis ueniat.*' Cf. *lib. arb.* 1,51, CSEL 74,131: '*Sed haec omnia hominum sunt ex illa mortis damnatione uenientium.*'

of '*causa pro effectu*', just as we refer to a language with the word 'tongue' (*lingua*), indicating both the cause of the spoken word and its effect, the spoken word itself.[64] The punishment of sin receives the name of its cause.

Augustine does not attempt to prove the logic of why it is just that Adam's progeny is punished for his sin. The only answer he gives is that 'equity would not allow Adam to beget offspring better than himself'.[65] As we have observed in his previous writings, Augustine always accepted humanity's solidarity with Adam. They sinned in Adam. Although he distinguishes Adam from his descendants, he understands humanity as a collective entity. This seems to me the reason why he so often refers to the sin of Adam and its consequences as respectively man's sin and man's condemnation.[66] When Adam chose to listen to the devil's suggestions, his offspring did so with him and justly inherited the punishments that he merited by his choice: mortality, ignorance of the good, and carnal concupiscence that impedes the will from bringing its knowledge of the good to action.

In several places, however, Augustine argues that God does not charge us for what we have become through the first sin, but for how we respond to our penal situation. If we come to the knowledge of our ignorance and difficulty, we have the duty to seek a way out of it through confession and prayer. In *De libero arbitrio* 3 Augustine explicitly emphasizes that God has left us the freedom to seek, ask, and knock (Matt. 7:7). In response, God gives us aid. If we do not use this freedom, we are rightfully condemned.[67] Augustine even

[64] *lib. arb.* 3,54.

[65] *lib. arb.* 3,55, CSEL 74,135: '*Iam uero ut meliores gigneret quam ipse esset non erat aequitatis*.' Cf. R. Holte, 'St. Augustine on Free Will (de libero arbitrio 3)', in *'De libero arbitrio' di Agostino D'Ippone* (Palermo: Augustinus, 1990), 81.

[66] See, *lib. arb.* 3,51–2. *De libero arbitrio* 3 distinguishes itself from other writings in that Augustine makes more effort to justify the assumption of our identity with Adam. O'Connell has argued that Augustine as a Neoplatonist assumes that our souls were somehow present in Adam's soul. Consequently, when Adam fell, we fell in him, because we were part of his soul (R. J. O'Connell, 'Involuntary Sin', 30). Although Augustine considers this possibility in his review of the different theories on the origin of the soul, he does not adopt the traducianist theory as his personal position. It seems to me that his major argument for our identity with Adam comes from his theodicy. If we commit moral wrongs against our will (out of ignorance and difficulty), these must be punishments, as all evil suffered is a punishment that comes from God. As God is just and almighty, this punishment must be God's own and must be just. Therefore, it must be a punishment for a sin freely committed. This presupposes that we were once good and merited God's punishment by sinning (3,51). Cf S. Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 128–9. It is therefore of secondary importance to Augustine *how* our souls relate to Adam's soul. He reviews different theories on the origin of the soul, but does not make any definite choice between them. Cf. G. Madec, *Dialogues philosophiques III. Bibliothèque augustinienne 6. Troisième édition* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976), note complémentaire 18, 582. Augustine himself also explicitly says that it is more important to know how the first man was created than to know how his offspring originated from him (*lib. arb.* 3, 71). Cf. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 182.

[67] *lib. arb.* 3,53, CSEL 74,133: '*Non tibi deputatur ad culpam quod inuitus ignoras, sed quod neglegis quaerere quod ignoras, neque illud quod uulnerata membra non colligis, sed quod*

argues that if we never were wise, if ignorance and difficulty belonged to our natural state, we would still be accountable for our sins on the basis of the fact that we, at a certain age, are able to acknowledge our state of ignorance, are admonished to seek help by divine providence, and are able to respond to this admonition in faith.[68]Augustine already suggested this idea in *De libero arbitrio* 1 and restates it in the third book of this work.

The Punishment of Sin in Augustine's Pauline Commentaries

This subsection addresses Augustine's treatment of the punishment of Adam's sin and of our subsequent sins in his commentaries and comments upon Romans and Galatians. In these commentaries Augustine introduces his fourfold scheme of salvation history and the order of salvation in the individual life. Whereas previously he had only used the sixfold division of history and the individual life, based on the days of creation, he now introduces a fourfold scheme, based on Paul's theology of salvation history, in which there is a time before the law (*ante legem*), a time under the law (*sub lege*), a time under grace (*sub gratia*), and a time in peace (*in pace*).[69] In the first stage we follow our carnal desires (*sequimur*); in the second phase, when we are confronted with the knowledge of the good, we are dragged by our desires (*trahimur*). Under grace, we are able to resist concupiscence (*non consentimur*). And in peace, after our resurrection, we no longer suffer from desires that oppose the law of God.[70]

uolentem sanare contemnis; ista tua propria peccata sunt.' *lib. arb.* 3,58, CSEL 74,137–8: '*Nullo modo creatorem hinc esse culpandum, quandoquidem, etiamsi eas ipse misisset, quibus etiam in ipsa ignorantia et difficultate liberam uoluntatem petendi et quaerendi et conandi non abstulit daturus petentibus demonstraturus quaerentibus pulsantibus aperturus, omnino extra culpam esset. Hanc enim ignorantiam et difficultatem studiosis et beneuolis euincendam ad coronam gloriae ualere praestaret, neglegentibus autem et peccata sua de infirmitate defendere uolentibus non ipsam ignorantiam difficultatemque pro crimine obiceret, sed, quia in eis potius permanere quam studio quaerendi atque discendi et humilitate confitendi atque orandi ad ueritatem ac facilitatem peruenire uoluerunt, iusto supplicio uindicaret.*'

[68] Augustine uses the example of a child, which is not guilty of the ignorance of language and the inability to speak when it is born, but becomes guilty if it refuses to learn.

[69] On this scheme, see A. F. N. Lekkerkerker, *Römer 7 und Römer 9 bei Augustin* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1942), 15–40; Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 147–64; Frederiksen, *Augustine's Early Interpretation of Paul*, 129–73. Frederiksen points to the continuity between both schemes. They both reflect high expectations of man's spiritual progress in this life, and presuppose a natural inclination of man to will the good. The fourfold scheme differs from the ascentional scheme in that it sees conversion rather in terms of a radical transition from *non posse* to *posse*, than as a gradual process of spiritual purification.

[70] *exp. prop. Rm.* 13–18; *exp. Gal.* 46,4–5. For an analysis of Augustine's use of Stoic anthropology on impulse and consent, see Daniel Austin Napier, *En Route to the Confessions*, 123–35.

As indicated before, when Augustine speaks of the punishment of the first sin, he connects corporeal death (*mors*) to the soul's misdirected desire (*concupiscentia/desideria praua*). In Augustine's commentaries on Romans and Galatians we see this interrelatedness recur in his interpretation of specific Pauline terms. For example, when Augustine comments on the meaning of the term *lex peccati* (Rom. 7:25) he writes: '[Paul] namely calls the law of sin the mortal condition which comes from the transgression of Adam, through which we have become mortal. Because of this defect of the flesh, carnal desire disturbs us, and according to this he also says at another place: "We also were by nature sons of wrath like the others" (Eph. 2:3).'[71] Augustine applies the same interpreation to Pauline terms such as *corpus/caro peccati* (Rom. 6:6; 8:3) and *corpus huius mortis* (Rom. 7:24). Both of these terms refer to man's mortality and to the carnal desires that tempt the mind to serve the interests of the body.[72]

However, the desires that arise from the mortal body should be distinguished from actual sin. Man sins by *giving in* to these desires. Through repeated acquiescence, the mind habituates itself to the desires of the body, so that it becomes enslaved to sinning. It develops the *prudentia carnis* that cannot be subject to the law of God.[73] When Paul says that sin (*peccatum*)—in the sense of *concupiscentia*, the penal effect of the first sin—has come to rule in our mortal bodies, he stresses that this rule has been realized through human consent to the desires of the flesh. Our soul bears mortal offspring, because it has married itself to the sinful passions of the body (Rom. 7:1–2).[74] This does not mean that this process of habituation is avoidable, but rather that humanity bears responsibility for it. Habituation is a penal consequence of our own choices.[75] We ourselves are responsible for the first sin and for the dominion of sin over us. Here we again encounter Augustine's anti-Manichaean motif of rooting involuntary sinning in man's own responsibility.[76] Just as in *De libero*

[71] *exp. prop. Rm.* 48, CSEL 84,20: '*Legem autem peccati dicit ex transgressione Adae conditionem mortalem, qua mortales facti sumus. Ex hac enim labe carnis concupiscentia carnalis sollicitat et secundum hanc dicit alio loco: fuimus et nos naturaliter filii irae sicut et ceteri [Eph. 2,3].*' Cf. *exp. prop. Rm.* 13–18, CSEL 84,8; *exp. prop. Rm.* 50, CSEL 84,23.

[72] *exp. prop. Rm.* 48; *diu. qu.* 66,6 (*caro peccati—Rom.* 8:3); *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–34; *exp. Gal.* 22 (*corpus peccati*—Rom. 6:6).

[73] *exp. prop. Rm.* 29; *exp. prop. Rm.* 13–18; 35; *exp. Gal.* 46.

[74] *exp. prop. Rm.* 13–18; 36; 47; 52; *exp. Gal.* 46–8.

[75] *exp. Gal.* 46, CSEL 84,122; *exp. Gal.* 48, CSEL 84,124; *Simpl.* 1,1,10, CCL 44,15; *Simpl.* 1,1,11, CCL 44,16.

[76] A comparison with the Pauline exegesis of the author of the Manichaean *Epistula ad Menoch*, Fragm. 2–3 illustrates this point. For the text, see Markus Stein, *Manichaeica Latina, Band 1: Epistula ad Menoch* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998), 15–20. In this passage the author identifies *peccatum* in Rom. 7:8 (*peccatum in me operaretur omnem concupiscentiam*) with the devil (*diabolus/spiritus concupiscentiae*) and represents the devil as the creator of the body. This body fuels our concupiscence. This means that the power of sin is ultimately rooted in something external to the human person. Augustine also identifies the rule of sin in us with the

arbitrio, however, Augustine defends the notion that man retains the freedom to ask God for help when he becomes aware of his penal situation.[77] In order to defend the justice of the distribution of divine grace, Augustine upholds the freedom of man to either put his faith in the liberator and to be enabled to fulfil the law through his grace, or to reject the way of faith and thus remain subject to condemnation. This freedom of the will continues to play a role in Augustine's understanding of perseverance.[78] It is the human person who must choose grace and keep choosing it.

Let us finally turn to *Ad Simplicianum.* Augustine's view of the effects of the first sin in *Ad Simplicianum* is consistent with his preceding writings. It is often suggested that Augustine makes a major turn in this work.[79] I am of the opinion that he merely draws conclusions from his earlier thinking. Although he uses new terms such as *peccatum originale*[80] and *originalis reatus* to refer to the first sin, he expresses ideas that were already present in his earlier writings. Humanity shares the responsibility for the first sin and therefore owes a penal debt. Augustine writes:

> All human beings—since, as the Apostle says, *all die in Adam* (1 Cor. 15:22), from whom the origin of the offense against God (*origo offensionis dei*) was brought to the whole human race—are a kind of single mass of sin owing a debt of punishment to the divine and loftiest justice, and whether [the punishment that is owed] be exacted or forgiven, there is no injustice.[81]

rule of the devil (*exp. prop. Rm.* 52), but argues that the devil rules over human beings through their own wills, which they have voluntarily subjected to him. Cf. Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 191.

[77] *exp. prop. Rm.* 44, CSEL 84,19: '*In libero autem arbitrio habet ut credat Liberatori, et accipiat gratiam.*' Still in *Simpl.* 1,1,14: '*Hoc enim restat in ista mortali uita libero arbitrio, non ut impleat homo iustitiam cum uoluerit, sed ut se supplici pietate conuertat ad eum cuius dono eam possit implere.*' Cf. P. Magnus Löhrer, *Der Glaubensbegriff des Hl. Augustinus in seinen ersten Schriften bis zu den Confessiones* (Einsiedeln: Benzinger Verlag, 1955), 248: 'Innerhalb dieses Systems erscheint der Glaube als reines Werk des Menschen'; Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 130–2; Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 165–71; Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification: The Beginnings to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 24; Thomas F. Martin, *Rhetoric and Exegesis in Augustine's Interpretation of Romans 7:24–25a* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 65ff; A. F. N. Lekkerkerker, *Römer 7 und Römer 9 bei Augustin* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1952), 26: 'Der Glaube ist ein letztes "meritum" dieses Menschen, eine letzte möglichkeit des freien Willens'; Babcock, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans', 65. It should be noted, however, that this faith does not originate autonomously. It only arises upon a preceding call of God. *ep. Rm. inch.* 9, CSEL 84,151: '*In eo quoque etiam poenitentiae meritum gratia praecedat, quod neminem peccatum sui poeniteret nisi admonitione aliqua vocationis Dei.*'

[78] *exp. Gal.* 46. Cf. Patout Burns, *Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1980), 36.

[79] The most famous proponent of this position is Flasch, *Logik des Schreckens*. See also TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 185, who speaks of a 'major turn' in Augustine's thinking.

[80] *Simpl.* 1,1,10.

[81] *Simpl.* 1,2,16, CCL 44,42: '*Ait, in Adam omnes moriuntur [1 Cor. 15,22], a quo in uniuersum genus humanum origo ducitur offensionis dei - una quaedam massa peccati supplicium debens diuinae summaeque iustitiae, quod siue exigatur siue donetur, nulla est iniquitas.*'

When Augustine famously refers to humanity as a *massa peccati*, he means that this first sin is transmitted to all subsequent generations (*tradux peccati*), that they are therefore bound by an original guilt (*originalis reatus*), and that this guilt accounts for the fact that they suffer under *concupiscentia carnalis* and death as its punishment.[82] Augustine had already made this clear in an earlier text, where he says: 'From the fact then that nature sinned in paradise, we are formed by mortal generation by the same divine providence not in line with heaven but in line with the earth (that is, not in accordance with the spirit but in accordance with the flesh), and we have all been made one mass of clay, which is a mass of sin. Since then by sinning we have lost merit and God's mercy is far off, there is nothing else that sinners deserve than eternal damnation.'[83]

What changes in this work is that Augustine starts to deny that election is based upon God's foreknowledge of human faith. He still affirms the freedom of the will to choose for faith in *Ad Simplicianum* 1,1,14. He denies it, however, in the second part of the first book. Whereas he had formerly defended that the power to 'seek, ask, and knock' (Matt. 7:7) are in the power of the will, so that God's grace is distributed according to the merit of faith, he now exclaims: 'The free choice of the will counts for a great deal, to be sure. But what does it count for in those who have been sold under sin?'[84] With no less rigour, however, Augustine upholds humanity's culpability and God's justice. Augustine continues to emphasize that human sin alone is the ground for condemnation. For instance, when Paul comes to speak about God's wrath against the vessels of unbelief, Augustine emphasizes that this wrath is not directed against them as creatures, but as sinners. God created human beings good, and they made themselves into sinners. When Romans 9:13 reads that God hated Esau, this does not mean that God's hatred is directed against Esau as such, for God hates nothing that he has made (Wisd. 11:25). God only hated Esau's sin.[85] Likewise, when God is said to make (*facere*) vessels of reproach, this does not mean that God causes humans to sin, but rather that he exacts a righteous judgement over them.[86] And when Romans 9:18 reads that God

[82] *Simpl.* 1,2,20, CCL 44,51: '*Tunc facta est una massa omnium, ueniens de traduce peccati et de poena mortalitatis, quamuis deo formante et creante quae bona sunt. In omnibus est enim species et conpago corporis in tanta membrorum concordia, ut inde apostolus ad caritatem obtinendam similitudinem duceret; in omnibus est etiam spiritus uitalis terrena membra humanum tamquam totam et unam consparsionem originali reatu in omnia permanente confuderat.*'

[83] *diu. qu.* 68, CCL 44A,177: '*Ex quo ergo in paradiso natura nostra peccauit, ab eadem diuina prouidentia non secundum caelum sed secundum terram, id est non secundum spiritum sed secundum carnem, mortali generatione formamur, et omnes una massa luti facti sumus, quod est massa peccati. cum ergo meritum peccando amiserimus, et misericordia dei remota nihil aliud peccantibus nisi aeterna damnatio debeatur.*'

[84] *Simpl.* 1,2,21, CCL 44,53: '*Liberum uoluntatis arbitrium plurimum ualet, immo uero est quidem, sed in uenundatis sub peccato quid ualet*?'

[85] *Simpl.* 1,2,18. [86] *Simpl.* 1,2,18.

hardens whom he will, this does not mean that he makes people worse, but rather that he righteously refuses to show his mercy.[87] God permitted Pharaoh to harden himself against God's admonitions, in order to punish him on the basis of his own merits and thus to show his righteousness as a judge of sinners.[88]

What changes in *Ad Simplicianum* is that Augustine now denies that there are certain hidden merits by which some among the mass of perdition make themselves worthy of the reception of grace.[89] God's *misericordia* is no longer based upon the good will, but does itself call the good will into existence through a *uocatio congrua*, which works as *effectrix bonae uoluntatis.*[90] All are equally incapable of turning to God, and nonetheless worthy of damnation, because they are fully responsible for their situation. That some receive justifying faith and others don't is solely based upon God's inscrutable decree. Augustine will therefore no longer appeal to the presence of our free will to turn to God in faith in order to battle Manichaean fatalism. His thinking shows continuity, however, in his defence of the justice of God in his judgement over humanity. Man has made himself a sinner, but he now lacks all resources to take the initiative to return to God.[91] Augustine himself confirms this change in his thinking in the *Retractationes,* where he says that he battled for the free will of man, but that the grace of God conquered him.[92]

Conclusion

Over against the Manichaean theory that we sin by compulsion and therefore cannot be held responsible for our actions (prior to our enlightenment by Christ), Augustine argues that this compulsion is a just retribution for the sin of Adam, and our subsequent sins. If we become implicated in sin, we cannot help ourselves to get out of this situation, but are still responsible for it, as we have merited this condition in Adam, and aggravate it by our subsequent sins. Thus, Augustine upholds the forensic character of the Christian religion, in which God deals with individuals according to the merits of their wills.

[87] *Simpl.* 1,2,15. [88] *Simpl.* 1,218; *diu. qu.* 68,4.

[89] *diu. qu.* 68,3–4. For the new position in *Ad Simplicianum,* see Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 247–8.

[90] *Simpl.* 1,2,13; *Simpl.* 1,2,21.

[91] Cf. Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 246–7 (contra Flasch' *Logik des Schreckens*): 'Augustin opfert mit *Simpl.* 1,2 nicht den Gedanken des *liberum arbitrium.* Es ist ihm vielmehr gerade ein zentrales Anliegen, (gegen die Manichäer gerichtet) am *liberum arbitrium* festzuhalten, und zwar vor allem im Zusammenhang des Sündenverständniss. Wie in der Paulusauslegung vor *Simpl.* 1,2 werden aber die Möglichkeiten des freien Willens im Hinblick auf die Erlösung stark eingeschränkt, in *Simpl.* 1,2 gerade auch hinsichtlich des Glaubensbegriffes.'

[92] *retr.* 2,1,1. In *perseu.* 52 Augustine characterizes the nature of his discovery more modestly. He says that when he started writing *Ad Simplicianum* he came to see more plainly (*plenius sapere coepi*) that God's grace is not dependent upon our preceding merits.

An important development takes place, however, with regard to Augustine's appeal to free will. He ceases to teach that God's decision to save or condemn man is based upon any merit of the human will.

THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW IN THE PROCESS OF SALVATION

This section investigates how Augustine perceives of the function of the law in the process of salvation. First, I will pay attention to Augustine's understanding of the law's pedagogical function in the life of the individual. Second, I will address Augustine's understanding of the law's function in the history of salvation. This treatment is divided in two parts. The first one address the salvation-historical function of the law according to *De utilitate credendi*, where Augustine explains Gal. 4:22–6 and 2 Cor. 3:6. This is the first text in which Augustine gives an extensive explanation of the Pauline image of the law as pedagogue that leads to Christ. In this text, he still interprets this relationship within the framework of *paideia*: The law leads to Christ the teacher. The second section, on the salvation-historical function of the law, describes the change in Augustine's thinking on the law as pedagogue to Christ from 394 onward.

The Elenctic Function of the Law in the Life of Man

In our penal situation, God introduces a law that teaches us the difference between good and evil. This law is intended to make its hearer suffer under his present condition, so that he is compelled to ask for help. Augustine distinguishes between the law of nature, and the moral law that was revealed in the form of the decalogue.

At several places, Augustine contends that all humans know the difference between good and evil by nature. As we already observed in *De libero arbitrio*, he argues time and again that our condition of ignorance and difficulty does not deprive us of the moral responsibility with which we were created. God still endows souls with the faculties by which they know that they have to acquire truth and should act according to it (*naturale iudicium; facultas bene faciendi*).[93] In *De sermone domini in monte* he even says that there is no human being, however blinded by lust, who is incapable of using his intellect,

[93] *lib. arb.* 3,57.

and perceiving a little light of truth. This truth is the law of nature that God has written in the hearts of men (Rom. 2:14–16).[94]

Augustine believes that among those people who were not blessed with God's special revelation, philosophers such as Plato and Socrates have perceived the law of nature in the best possible way. They knew that creation pointed to its Creator, and that this Creator should be the sole object of worship. However, Augustine argues, only Christ could enable them to live according to what the law of nature commanded them to do. Without Christ, they possessed knowledge of the truth, but it could not lead them to right action. On the contrary, they tended to act contrary to what they knew to be true, as they continued to participate in the cult of demons, out of fear of rejection from the side of the people.[95] This shows that true philosophy can lead man to the knowledge of the truth, but does not set him free from the dominion of the flesh. It should lead its practitioner to cry for help to the God of Christianity.

Augustine addresses the elenctic function of the decalogue (the revealed law) in his reading of Romans 7. This revealed law exercises the same function as the law of nature: it intends to make us experience our present situation as something that we suffer against our will, but from which we cannot redeem ourselves. Augustine argues that the law, when it is introduced in our lives, cannot lead us to life, but rather makes us conscious of the rule of sin over us. Augustine explains Rom. 7:9 (*ego autem uiuebam aliquando sine lege, adueniente autem mandato peccatum reuiuixit, ego autem mortuus sum*) as saying that Paul once thought that he lived, namely before he got to know the law. But through the law, which says, 'you shall not covet' (*non concupisces*), he came to know what sin is, namely *concupiscence,* the impulse he was always inclined to follow. This made him realize that he was in fact spiritually dead.[96]

The awareness of sin, however, does not imply that man is able to conquer its dominion. When man hears the law of God and starts to delight in it,[97]

[94] *s. dom. m.* 2,32.

[95] Augustine already argued this in *uera rel.* 1–6. He also makes this point in *ep.* 118.

[96] *exp. prop. Rm.* 38, CSEL 84,17: '*Quod autem ait: ego autem uiuebam aliquando sine lege [Rm. 7,9], intellegendum est, uiuere mihi uidebar, quia ante mandatum latebat peccatum. Et quod ait: adueniente autem mandato peccatum reuixit, ego autem mortuus sum [Rm. 7,9sq.], intellegendum est, peccatum apparere coepit, ego autem mortuum me esse cognoui*.' Cf. *Simpl.* 1,1,4, where Augustine points out that the words *peccatum reuiuixit* mean that sin was once known as sin, namely by Adam who received God's commandment. After him the knowledge of sin was lost, but when the law was reintroduced this knowledge was revivified.

[97] In this stage Augustine applies Rom. 7:22 (*condelector enim legi dei secundum interiorem hominem*) still to man *sub lege*, but will later contend that man *sub lege* cannot delight in the law of God in any way. He can have fear of punishment and therefore desire to do the law, but this is not a true delight in what the law requires. See F. van Fleteren, 'Augustine's Evolving Exegesis of Romans 7:22–23 in its Pauline Context', *Augustinian Studies* 32/1 (2007), 89–114 (95ff.); M.-F. Berrouard, 'L'Exegese augustinienne de Rom. 7,7-25 entre 396 et 418, avec des remarques sur les deux periodes de la crise pelagienne', *Recherches augustiniennes* 16 (1981), 101–96.

concupiscence begins to resist that delight with a much stronger counter-delight. Sin uses the commandment to give rise to all kinds of disobedient desires (Rom. 7:8). Without the grace of the liberator who strengthens the mind against these desires, man's initial delight in the law of God is necessarily overcome by the much stronger delight in sinning. Hence, man is dragged towards transgression of the law against his will. Commenting on Rom. 7:8, Augustine writes:

> As through the prohibition, concupiscence is increased, when the grace of the liberator is absent, therefore it has not yet reached its full measure before it is prohibited. When, however, it is prohibited, when grace, as we mentioned, is absent, concupiscence grows to such a degree that it becomes complete in its nature, so that it even opposes the law and adds to the offence by transgression.[98]

The introduction of the law thus shows sin to us in its true nature and in its true power over us. Man under the law might want the good, but is unable to do it, because the habituated delight of sin overrules the mind's consent to the law of God. In this way, sin deceives man and in doing so kills him (Rom. 7:11). It makes him believe that its sweetness is preferable to the demands of God's law, but after man has given in to sin's temptation, it shows its true nature in the bitterness of punishment.[99]

It is exactly this experience of suffering under the law through which God compels man to humble himself and seek the grace of Christ. Only when he refuses to do so through pride (and tries to redeem himself from this suffering by either denying his guilt or appeasing his conscience with his own merits) does he lock himself up in his penal condition, in which he will ultimately suffer final damnation. As we have seen, Augustine abandons this latter position in *Ad Simplicianum.* God's condemnation or salvation of man is no longer based upon God's foreseen refusal or acceptance of his help. Humbling faith in the face of the law's accusation is a gift, rather than an accomplishment of man's free will.[100]

[98] *exp. prop. Rm.* 37, CSEL 84,16: '*Augetur enim prohibitione concupiscentia, quando deest gratia liberantis, ideo nondum est omnis, antequam prohibeatur. Cum autem prohibita fuerit desistente ut diximus, gratia, tantum crescit concupiscentia, ut ita in suo genere omnis, id est, consummata fiat, ut etiam contra legem fiat et praeuaricatione crimen accumulet.*'

[99] *exp. prop. Rm.* 39, CSEL 84,17: '*Quod autem ait: peccatum enim occasione accepta per mandatum fefellit me et per illud occidit [Rm. 7,11], ideo dictum est, quia desiderii prohibiti fructus dulcior est . . . Ista dulcedo est occasio per mandatum inuenta peccati, quae cum appetitur, utique fallit et in maiores amaritudines uertit.*' Cf. *exp. prop. Rm.* 42, CSEL 84,18 where Augustine speaks of the sin as 'selling one's soul to the devil for the sweet prise of temporal pleasure' (*unusquisque peccando animam suam diabolo uendit accepta tamquam pretio dulcedine temporalis uoluptatis*); *Simpl.* 1,1,5, CCL 44,5: '*Peccatum non legitime utens lege ex prohibitione aucto desiderio dulcius factum est et ideo fefellit. Fallax enim dulcedo est, quam plures atque maiores poenarum amaritudines consequuntur.*'

[100] On the humbling function of the law and faith as the expression of humility, see Thomas Gerhard Ring, 'Die pastorale Intention Augustins in De diuersis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum',

The Salvation-Historical Function of the Law: *De utilitate credendi* (391/392)

In Chapter 3 I demonstrated how Augustine developed an understanding of the Old Testament law in opposition to Manichaeism. According to Augustine, God accommodated his method of teaching to the fallen situation of his chosen people. By giving them a temporal law, and by threatening with temporal punishments, he both restrained their inclination to worship the idols of the nations and prefigured the future teaching and life of Christ and his Church.

During the 390s Augustine developed this understanding of the law through his rereading of Paul. The Pauline texts that fuel the development of his understanding of the Old Testament law are Galatians 3–4 (on the law as *paedagogos*) and 1 Corinthians 3:6 ('*littera occidit, spiritus vivificat*'). Augustine first interpreted these texts primarily from a hermeneutical perspective. In this perspective, the law primarily functions as accommodated teaching of what would be revealed in the instruction and life of Jesus. We already encountered this approach in Chapter 3. Gradually, however, Augustine integrated this approach to the law of the Old Testament with a more Pauline understanding of sin and salvation through Christ. God gave the law to the people of Israel to convince them of their slavery to sin, so that they would be convinced of their helplessness in the face of divine judgement, and seek refuge through faith in the grace of the mediator. In this context the law intends not just to teach, but also to humble the sinner. Furthermore, its hermeneutical meaning not only refers to Christ's teaching and example, but also to his death on the cross as the means through which he becomes the mediator of righteousness for those who were under the law.[101]

The first passage in which Augustine explains the function of the Old Testament law, using the aforementioned Pauline texts, comes from *De utilitate credendi* (391–2). This tractate starts with a discussion of four hermeneutical rules that characterize a Catholic reading of the Old Testament over against a Manichaean interpretation (the historical, analogical, aetiological, and allegorical senses).[102] According to Augustine, all of these rules have been used by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament to interpret the Old. In *De utilitate credendi* 8–9 Augustine discusses Paul's use of allegory, the

in *Homo Spiritalis. Festgabe für Luc Verheijen zum 70. Geburtstag*, edited by Cornelius Peter Mayer (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1987), 178–9.

[101] Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 54–7 distinguishes between a hermeneutical and a soteriological meaning of 2 Cor. 3:16 in Augustine. Although I agree with this distinction, one should not forget that for Augustine the hermeneutical approach to this text has a soteriological dimension.

[102] *util. cred.* 5.

reading of Old Testament passages as signs of New Testament realities. As an example of such an allegorical reading of Old Testament history, Augustine takes Galatians 4:22–6.[103] Manichees use this text to argue that the Catholics, who acknowledge the Old Testament law as part of Scripture, are still slaves, sons of Hagar, who signifies the Sinaitic covenant. Christ has revealed the oppressive character of the Sinaitic covenant and thus freed his followers from it by radically abolishing it. Therefore, they argue, those who still hold the Old Testament law as in some sense authoritative have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). According to Augustine, the Manichees understand the grace of Christ as the revelation of the law's oppressive character, which had always already been an evil intrusion of the Hebrew God upon free people.

In *De utilitate credendi* 9, Augustine opposes this interpretation of Galatians 4. He argues that God imposed the law upon a people who were enslaved to their passions and could not be motivated to refrain from sinning by reason. Only the fear of temporal punishment, which even the foolish understand, held them back from sin.[104] Simultaneously, Augustine argues, this law had a deeper figurative meaning. Its pedagogical function was not only to restrain sin, but also to signify grace. It signified the grace of Christ, which would enable them to understand the eternal realities that the law had always pointed to. Thus, Christ the teacher did not abolish the Old Testament law, but took away the veil that covered its meaning (2 Cor. 3:14). Through the Spirit of Christ the precepts and mandates of the Old Testament law disclose their mysterious meaning. Those who receive his Spirit, the Christians, are the sons of the heavenly Jerusalem, signified by Sarah. They are free, not from the law itself, but from a carnal interpretation of the law that made them obey externally, hoping for temporal rewards and fearing temporal punishments. They understand the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament law and obey it voluntarily.

[103] *util. cred.* 9, CSEL 25,1,12: '*Idem enim Paulus dicit ad Galatas: scriptum est enim quod Abraham duos filios habuit unum de ancilla et unum de libera. Sed is quidem qui de ancilla secundum carnem natus est. Qui autem de libera per promissionem quae sunt per allegoriam dicta. Nam haec sunt duo testamenta. Unum quidem de monte Sina in seruitutem generans quod est Agar [Gal. 4,22-24]. Sina enim mons est in Arabia quae confinis est ei quae nunc est Hierusalem et seruit cum filiis suis. Quae autem sursum est Hierusalem libera est quae est mater omnium nostrum.*'

[104] *util. cred.* 9, CSEL 25,1,12: '*Legem necessariam esse dicimus nisi eis, quibus est adhuc utilis seruitus, ideoque utiliter esse latam, quod homines, qui reuocari a peccatis ratione non poterant, tali lege cohercendi erant, poenarum scilicet istarum, quae uideri ab stultis possunt, minis atque terroribus. A quibus gratia Christi cum liberat, non legem illam damnat, sed aliquando nos obtemperare suae caritati, non seruire timore legis inuitat. Ipsa est gratia, id est beneficium, quod non intellegunt sibi uenisse diuinitus, qui adhuc esse cupiunt sub uinculis legis. Quos merito Paulus obiurgat tamquam infideles, quia a seruitute, cui certo tempore iustissima dei dispositione subiecti erant, iam per dominum nostrum Iesum se liberatos esse non credunt. Hinc est illud eiusdem apostoli. Lex enim paedagogus noster erat in Christo [Gal. 3,24]. Ille igitur paedagogum dedit hominibus, quem timerent, qui magistrum postea, quem diligerent.*'

The Jews, however, who did not believe in Christ, remained captive to this carnal interpretation. They are the sons of the mountain Sinai, signified by Hagar, who lives in slavery with her people. For those who reject Christ the letter kills; for those who love him as their teacher, the Spirit vivifies (2 Cor. 3:6).[105] In his exegesis, Augustine joins an early Christian tradition, which interpreted Paul's image of the law as pedagogue through the lens of classical educational practice, in which the pedagogue led the pupil to its teacher.[106]

The Salvation-Historical Function of the Law: Romans and Galatians (394–396)

Augustine's understanding of the function of Old Testament law in *De utilitate credendi* continues the hermeneutical approach to the law that we discussed in Chapter 3, albeit with a more explicit use of Pauline texts: the pedagogue foreshadows the teaching of Christ, and accommodates the demands of the divine law to carnal people. When Augustine starts to write his commentaries on Romans and Galatians (394–5), however, a new aspect occurs in his understanding of the function of the law. It was not just given to constrain sin and to foreshadow Christ's future teaching, but also to bring its hearers to the knowledge and confession of sin and to faith in the mediator of righteousness. Especially his exegesis of Galatians 3 on the relationship between God's covenant with Abraham and the giving of the law to Israel proves to be relevant in this regard. In the following section, I will point out how Augustine treats the function of the law and its sanctions in his exegesis of this chapter.

God's relationship with Israel begins with the establishment of a covenant between himself and Abraham and his offspring. In Abraham, God separated his people from the nations and dedicated it to himself. God promised Abraham to be the God of his offspring forever, to give them an everlasting resting place in Canaan, and to bless the entire world through them.

[105] *util. cred.* 9, CSEL 25,1,12: '*. . . in quibus tamen legis praeceptis atque mandatis, quibus nunc christianos uti fas non est, quale uel sabbatum est uel circumcisio uel sacrificia et si quid huiusmodi est, tanta mysteria continentur, ut omnis pius intellegat nihil esse perniciosius quam quicquid ibi est accipi ad litteram id est ad uerbum. Nihil autem salubrius quam spiritu reuelari. Inde est: littera occidit spiritus autem uiuificat [2 Cor. 3,6]. Inde est. id ipsum uelamen in lectione ueteris testamenti manet quod non reuelatur quoniam in Christo euacuatur [2 Cor. 3,14]. Euacuatur namque in Christo non uetus testamentum, sed uelamen eius.*'

[106] Werner Jentsch, *Urchristliches Erziehungsdenken. Die Paideia Kyriu im Rahmen der hellenistisch-jüdischen Umwelt* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmannverlag, 1951), 276. Paul refers to the Old Testament law with the word 'pedagogue' to denote its temporal and its sin-curbing function for the people of Israel before the coming of Christ. The assumption that Paul implicitly regards Christ as the teacher to whom this pedagogue leads stretches the comparison too far. See David J. Lull, '"The Law was our Pedagogue": A Study in Galatians 3:19–25', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105/3 (1986), 481–98 (esp. 496–8).

This promise to Abraham signified the blessings of the New Testament, veiled in the shadows of the Old. In promising an earthly kingdom to Abraham and his seed, God in fact promised them eternal life with God himself in his everlasting kingdom.[107]

Furthermore, Augustine observes that the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham was solely based upon God's unchangeable will.[108] The actual inheritance of the promised future did not depend upon obedience to God's law, but solely upon God's own promise. Hence, the later imposition of the law upon Abraham's descendants could not invalidate this promise to Abraham and his offspring, as Paul says in Galatians 3:17. '*Yet no one*, he says, *annuls or adds to the will of an ordinary human being once it has been ratified* . . . . Just as the testator's death serves to ratify his will, because he is no longer able to change his decision, so the unchangeability of God's promise serves to ratify the inheritance of Abraham.'[109]

However, as we have previously noted, Augustine simultaneously upholds that communion with God requires human obedience to the divine law. This is how God's relationship with humanity works: obedience to his law leads to life, whereas disobedience leads to death. The inheritance of the Promised Land required that God's people be righteous in his sight. Only righteous people pass through divine judgement without being consumed by it.[110] This demand of righteousness on the one hand and the unconditional nature of God's promise to Abraham on the other seems to lead to a collision between God's justice and his mercy, for when Abraham received the promise he was still unrighteous. How is this tension resolved? The well-known Pauline answer, followed and explained by Augustine, is that Abraham was justified by faith. In his *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola apostoli ad Romanos* Augustine points out that Abraham 'was justified not by his own merit as through works, but by the grace of God through faith'.[111] The circumcision that followed—a work of the law—was a *signaculum iustitiae fidei,* a typological affirmation of God's justifying work in his people. It was a sacrament that signified the cleansing of our conscience through Christ, in whom the old man was put to death and the new man came to life.[112] By circumcision God ratified his own promise to Abraham that he would make him and his seed inherit the earth on the basis of a rigtheousness that he would

[107] In *c. Adim.* 18–20, Augustine states at several places that the Old Testament promise of an abundant life in Canaan signified the restored and fulfilled communion of God's people with God himself. He moreover emphasizes against the Manichees that this idea is already present in the Old Testament itself (*c. Adim.* 19, referring to Ps. 144:11–15; Ps. 37:16; Ps. 119:72; Ps. 19:9–10; Prov. 3:13–15; Wisd. 7:7–9).

[108] *exp. Gal.* 40. [109] *exp. Gal.* 23; *diu qu.* 75. [110] *exp. prop. Rm.* 9; *c. Adim.* 26–7.

[111] *exp. prop. Rm.* 20 (translation: Frederiksen, *Augustine on Romans*, 7).

[112] *exp. Gal.* 20 (*signaculum fidei*); *c. Adim.* 16 (*signaculum iustitiae fidei*); *ep.* 23,3 (*signaculum iustitiae fidei*).

bestow upon him through faith in Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, God's justice and mercy would come together unto salvation for all who believe. In God's covenant with Abraham, one is justified by faith in Christ, the mediator of righteousness, rather than by one's own merits.[113]

But if Abraham and his offspring were justified before God through faith, why was the law still given? The law was given in order to compel God's people to actually seek salvation through faith in God's mercy. After all, they too belonged to humanity after the fall, which had lost the knowledge of sin and simply followed their own concupiscence.[114] They did not think of themselves as unrighteous in the sight of God, deserving of damnation and standing in need of God's mercy. In order to seek salvation through faith, they needed to be brought to the knowledge of their own condemned state and of God as their saviour. As Augustine puts it in his commentary on Galatians:

> The law was ordained, therefore, for a proud people so that they might be humbled by their transgressions . . . so that they might seek grace and not assume they could be saved by their own merits (which is pride), and so that they might be righteous not by their own power and strength, but by the hand of a mediator who justifies the impious.[115]

The law was meant to teach those who naturally thought of themselves as righteous people that they were in fact imprisoned on death row (Gal. 3:23: *sub peccato conclusus*), awaiting their condemnation, if they did not take refuge in the mediator.[116] In this context, the Pauline phrase, 'the letter kills,' assumes a new meaning. It not only refers to the effect of the law on those who do not understand its allegorical and prophetic meaning, but also comes to indicate the juridical function of the law as the prosecutor of guilty sinners. As such, the law was an instrument in the hands of Christ (before his incarnation) to draw his people to faith in him.[117] Augustine writes:

[113] *exp. prop. Rm.* 25. [114] *exp. Gal.* 46; *exp. prop. Rm.* 13–18.

[115] *exp. Gal.* 24, CSEL 84,88: '*Superbienti ergo populo lex posita est, ut, quoniam gratiam caritatis nisi humiliatus accipere non posset et sine hac gratia nullo modo praecepta legis impleret, transgressione humiliaretur, ut quaereret gratiam nec se suis meritis saluum fieri, quod superbum est, opinaretur, ut esset non in sua potestate et uiribus iustus, sed in manu mediatoris iustificantis impium*' (translation: Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 168).

[116] *exp. Gal.* 25, CSEL 84,90: '*Non ergo lex data est, ut peccatum auferret sed ut sub peccato omnia concluderet. lex enim ostendebat esse peccatum, quod illi per consuetudinem caecati possent putare iustitiam, ut hoc modo humiliati cognoscerent non in sua manu esse salutem suam, sed in manu mediatoris*.' Cf. *exp. Gal.* 26: '*. . . in adventum eius fidei, quae postea reuelata est, conclusio enim eorum erat timor unius dei*.' Augustine's exegesis might have been influenced by the Donatist exegete Tyconius. In his *Liber regularum*, 3,10, Tyconius gives an extensive allegory of faith as the guard who is the only one able to open the door of the death row. On Tyconius' possible influence on Augustine in this period, see Babcock, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans (A.D. 394–396)', *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979), 67–74.

[117] *Simpl.* 1,1,17, CCL 44,23. In this text Augustine combines both of his exegeses of Paul's expression 'littera occidit'. It kills when it is read but not understood in its signifying function,

> "*The seed was placed by angels* [who administrated the law, BvE] *in the hand of a mediator* so that he might liberate from their sins those now forced through transgression of the law to confess that they need the grace and mercy of the Lord, so that their sins might be forgiven and they might be reconciled to God in a new life through him who had poured out his blood for them."[118]

However, this humility was only effected in the chosen seed, the spiritual descendants of Abraham, who perceived the law with spiritual eyes. The carnal people in the Old Testament thought that they were righteous as long as they obeyed the external commands of the law. They did not perceive its spiritual meaning. This becomes clear from the reaction of the Israelite leaders to Christ. During his life on earth, he exposed Israel to its alleged self-righteousness. Augustine argues that Israel's leaders, had used the sacramental law to justify themselves before God and to ascertain themselves of God's temporal blessings. They tried to attain a 'righteousness that is by the law' (Phil. 3:6: *iustitia quae in lege est*).[119] Augustine emphasizes that there was nothing wrong with this law-righteousness itself. It had its temporary function as a sign of the righteousness that Christ would bring. But in and of itself it was nothing more than a kind of civil obedience. It did not justify the sinner before God.[120] Israel's problem was the tendency to seek their justification from God from this law-righteousness. 'Glorying about their father Abraham, [they] boasted that they had a kind of natural righteousness (*iustitia naturalis*) and the more arrogantly they preferred their merits in circumcision above the Gentiles the more dangerously (they boasted in them).'[121] In other words, the law was used as a means to self-justification and boasting over others.[122]

In his ministry, Christ criticizes this way of using the law. He shows that the sacramental law was always already about the love of God and the neighbour. He does not reject the law itself, but shows that he has come to fulfil it as the Word of God who had instituted this law for a time, in order to supersede it at the end of time by revealing and embodying the righteousness that it demanded. This is why Christ started to relativize and 'transgress' the

and it kills when it is not fulfilled (*lex enim tantummodo lecta et non intellecta uel non inpleta utique occidit; tunc enim appellatur littera*).

[118] *exp. Gal.* 24, CSEL 84,88: '*Dispositum est per angelos semen in manu mediatoris [Gal 3,19], ut ipse liberaret a peccatis iam per transgressionem legis coactos confiteri opus sibi esse gratiam et misericordiam domini, ut sibi peccata dimitterentur et in noua uita per eum, qui pro se sanguinem fudisset, reconciliarentur deo*' (translation: Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 169).

[119] *exp. Gal.* 21.

[120] *exp. Gal.* 43.

[121] *exp. Gal.* 25, CSEL 84,89: '*In istis enim erat per transgressionem legis confringenda superbia, qui gloriantes de patre Abraham quasi naturalem se habere iactabant iustitiam et merita sua in circumcisione ceteris gentibus tanto perniciosius quanto arrogantius praeferebant.*'

[122] *exp. Gal.* 21.

sacramental commandments of the law in order to show their true moral meaning.[123] In this way, he showed the Jewish idolatry with the law and called them to faith in himself as the one who had come to fulfil the law. The Jews, however, regarded Jesus as a transgressor of the law, and transgressors of the law should be excluded from the community of Israel, according to the law's own stipulations. As a consequence of their rejection, Christ, the just one, suffered the curse of the law (*maledictum legis*). The punishment that was intended for sinful Israel was now executed over the one and only just Israelite.

In this way God's grace and judgement came together in the death of Christ. He died the death that all deserved, and to which the sacraments of the law, and God's temporary judgements over Israel, had always pointed. Thus he took upon himself Israel's curse, so that they could be liberated from their bondage to sin and death, and become heirs of the heavenly life that God had promised to Abraham. In this way, Christ became the righteousness of God for all who believe (Rom. 10:3), but a stumbling block for those who boasted in the works of the law, and refused to put their faith in him as the mediator of righteousness.[124] Thus, the separation between the sons of Hagar, who live after the flesh, and the sons of Sarah, who live according to the Spirit, continues in the time of the New Testament.[125] The former continue to live *sub lege* and await final condemnation, whether the latter are justified *sub gratia*, and await the final peace at the resurrection.

[123] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,81: '*Propterea dominus Iesus Christus iam libertatem daturus credentibus, quaedam earum obseruationem non seruauit ad litteram. Unde etiam cum sabbato esurientes discipuli spicas euulsissent, respondit indignantibus dominum esse filium hominis etiam sabbati. Itaque illa carnaliter non observando carnalium conflagrauit inuidiam et suscepit qudem poenam propositam illis, qui ea non obseruassent, sed ut credentes in se talis poenae timor liberaret, quo pertinet, quod adiungit: Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis factus pro nobis maledictum . . .*'

[124] *en Ps.* 19,9, CCL 38,11: '*Ipsi obligati sunt, et ceciderunt [Ps. 19,9]. Et ideo ipsi temporalium rerum cupiditate obligati sunt, timentes parcere domino, ne a Romanis pererent locum; et irruentes in lapidem offensionis et petram scandali, de spe caelesti ceciderunt; quibus caecitas ex parte Israel facta est, ignorantibus dei iustitiam, et suam uolentibus constituere. Nos uero surreximus, et erecti sumus [Ps. 19,9], de lapidibus excitati filii Abraham qui non sectabamur iustitiam, adprehendimus eam, et surreximus; nec uiribus nostris, sed per fidem iustificati erecti sumus*.' For Augustine's use of Rom. 10:3, see further *en. Ps.* 17,28; 27,8; 28,6.

[125] Augustine's exegesis of Gal. 4:21–31, the allegory of the sons of Hagar and Sarah, plays an important role in his polemics against the Donatists. Augustine comes to apply the distinction between Jews and Christians, signified by Hagar and Sarah, to the opposition between Donatists and Catholics. Just as Sarah persecuted Hagar in order to discipline her pride and bring her to humility and confession, the Catholic Church persecuted the Donatists, Augustine argues in *ep.* 185. An extensive overview of Augustine's exegesis of this passage is given by Wendy Elgersma Helleman, '"Abraham had two sons": Augustine and the Allegory of Sarah and Hagar (Galatians 4:21–31)', *Calvin Theological Journal* 48 (2013), 35–64.

CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE BEARING OF THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

This section investigates how Augustine understands the death of Christ and its salvific meaning. In Chapter 3, we concluded that, although Augustine regards Christ as a real human being, who assumed our mortal body for the sake of our redemption, he did not yet have a clear view of how Christ's death (and resurrection) constituted human salvation historically. Augustine interpreted Christ's death on the cross primarily as a consequence of his exemplary life, in which his love for God made him shun the things humanity strives for and bear the things that humanity tries to avoid. Grace consisted of Christ's liberating influence on our minds, mediated through the Spirit. In the early 390s Augustine continued this pedagogical Christology.[126] In this model, the primary redemptive significance of Christ is not what he accomplished historically, but rather the subjective influence of his example on our minds. Augustine viewed Christ's death in this exemplarist perspective.

Gradually, however, Augustine came to reflect upon the uniquely redemptive significance of Christ's death on the cross. Michael Cameron has argued that this development might be explained by the fact that his polemics with the Manichees compelled Augustine to further reflect upon the significance of Christ's real humanity.[127] Hitherto Augustine had explained the necessity of the Incarnation primarily from the idea of accommodation. Christ assumed a mortal body in order be visible for flesh-bound people and to give them a model of how to live a virtuous life. The Manichees, however, had a quite similar understanding of Christ. They regarded the historical human Jesus as the instrument through which the heavenly Christ admonished his followers to separate themselves from matter and return to the kingdom of light. They denied, however, the Incarnation itself, the unique personal assumption of human flesh and spirit by the Son of God. For them the historical Jesus was one of the many human persons through whom the 'Jesus of Splendor' had taught humanity to return to the Father of light.[128] Also Jesus' death on the

[126] See, for example, *c. Fort.* 17, CCL 38,15: '*Peccando enim auersi eramus a deo, tenendo autem praecepta Christ reconciliamur a deo, ut qui in peccatis mortui eramus, seruantes praecepta eius uiuificemur et pacem habeamus cum illo in uno spiritu*.' For the changes that appear between 392 and 394, see Joanne McWilliam Dewart, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross: 387–400', *Augustinian Studies* 15 (1984), 15–33. She distinguishes between Augustine's use of the cross as an example of self-mortification, as an example of courage inspired by the hope of the resurrection, and as a ransom for sin, although this latter notion is rather undeveloped before 394.

[127] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 159.

[128] Lam, *Die Heilsbedeutung*, 83–91. On the basis of recent research, Lam stresses that the Manichees did not teach docetism in the sense that the man who died on the cross was not a real human being. Rather, they made a strong seperation between two Christs, the Jesus of Splendor and Jesus of Nazareth. Cf. Kurt Rudolph, *Die Gnosis*, 160–71 (esp. 171). The historical person of Jesus is one of the figures through whom the heavenly Christ reveals to the soul that it suffers

cross was seen as an illustration of a general and timeless truth, namely the universal suffering of the soul in the realm of darkness.[129] When Augustine, through his rereading of Paul, came to reflect upon the meaning of the death of Christ, he had to respond to this Manichaean interpretation. Did the Son of God illustrate a universal truth by dying on the cross, or did he do more than that? Augustine is challenged to think through the soteriological implications of his belief in the personal union of the Son of God with human nature. From around 394, Augustine began to argue that Christ assumed a body not only for the purpose of revelation and inspiration, but also in order to enact the Church's salvation in that very body. The Son of God assumed a human soul and a mortal body, in order to bear the penalty for sin in his body, to take it away through his death, and to restore human nature to integrity through his resurrection.

Thus, Augustine came to stress against the Manichees the unique redemptive significance of Christ's death on the cross. It does not illustrate the universal suffering of the divine soul in the realm of matter, but rather enacts the condemnation of the old man in the body of Christ on behalf of his people, so that those who believe are liberated from sin and its penal consequences. The following subsections address Christ's bearing of humanity's punishment from three different texts: Augustine's commentaries on the Pauline letters, *De libero arbitrio* 3, and *Enarratio in Psalmum* 21,1. Each text approaches the theme from a different angle.

The Commentaries on the Letters of Paul

The following provides an overview of Augustine's developing exegesis of Pauline texts that address the meaning of Christ's death. I will show that

under the powers of darkness. Jesus' historical suffering functions as an allegory of the universal suffering of the divine worldsoul. See. *c. Faust.* 33,7: '*. . . credimus cetere, praeterea crucis eius mysticam fixionem, qua nostrae animae passionis monstrantur vulnera*.' It is for this reason that Faustus could contend that Jesus, as the *spiritalis profusio* of the Father, suffers on every tree (*c. Faust.* 20,2), but did not die on the cross (*c. Faust.* 26,2). Manichaeism denies the Incarnation and therefore ends up interpreting the story of the cross as an illustration of a universal truth about the suffering soul. Through this revelation the Manichee receives the knowledge that helps him to become aware of his *anima bona*, and to separate himself from the body of death, by which the prince of darkness held him captive.

On Manichaean docetism, see F. Décret, 'La Christologie manichéene dans la controverse d'Augustin avec Fortunatus', in *Essais sur l'Église manichéene en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de Augustin: recueil d'études* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1995), 269–80; On Faustus' Christology, see Gregor Wurst, 'Bemerkungen zum Glaubensbekenntnis des Faustus von Mileve (Augustinus, *c. Faust*. 20, 2)', in *Studia Manichaica, vol. IV. Internationaler Kongress zum Manichaïsmus, Berlin 14–18 Juli 1997*, edited by Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, and Peter Zieme (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 648–55. On Manichaean dualist soteriology, see F. Décret, 'Giustificazione e salvezza dell' "uomo novo" ', in *Essais sur l'Église manichéene*, 107–13.

[129] Lam, *Die Heilsbedeutung*, 93.

Augustine, in his appropriation of Pauline texts that mention Christ's crucifixion, moves from a more subjective to an objective approach. From an example of self-mortification, Christ's death becomes the representative bearing of the curse of the law for the sake of those who suffered under its condemnation.

In *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4 Augustine discusses Rom. 6:6: 'We know that our old man has been crucified together (with him), so that the body of sin would be emptied.' Augustine immediately connects this text to Deut.. 21:23 where Moses says that everyone is cursed who hangs on a tree.[130] Why does Augustine connect these texts? Probably, this is part of one of his discussions with the Manichees, who used this text to prove that Moses is opposed to Christ.[131] According to the Manichees, if Moses really cursed Christ, he is opposed to the New Testament and cannot be a real prophet.[132] Instead, Augustine argues that Christ on the cross signified (*significata est*) the crucifixion of the old man, just as his resurrection signified the renewal of the new man. Hence, Moses did not curse the Lord, but only prophesied what his crucifixion displayed (*ostenderet*), namely the doing away of the old man. Michael Cameron has argued that this indicates that Augustine in this passage regards Christ's death as only an imitable image of the Christian's self-mortification. Figure and reality are juxtaposed, rather than conjoined. Augustine would have used this idea in order to avoid bringing grist to the mill of the Manichees by associating Christ too closely with sin.[133]

According to my own reading, Augustine at this point is simply not entirely clear about the exact relationship between Christ and the death of the old man. On the one hand he wants to keep Christ free from sin (which he will also argue for later), but on the other hand he wants to do justice to texts in which Christ is identified with the old man, such as 1 Pet. 2:24 ('he bore our sins'), 2 Cor. 5:21 ('he committed sin for us' or 'he was made sin for us'[134]), and Rom. 8:3 ('from sin he condemned sin'[135]). On the basis of these texts, Augustine concludes: 'It is clear that we act according to that old man, which is cursed. No one doubts that because of this man (*propter quem*), sin can be applied to

[130] *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4, CSEL 84,14: '*Hoc scientes, quia uetus homo noster simul crucifixus est, ut euacuetur corpus peccati, refertur ad illud, quod per Moysen dictum est: maledictum omnis qui in ligno ependerit.*'

[131] See *c. Faust.* 14,1. According to the Manichees, Moses did not so much curse the historical Christ, but the Christ who suffers in the entire world. See F. Décret, 'La Doctrine du *Iesus Patibilis* dans la polémique antijudaïque des Manichéens d'Afrique', in *Essais sur l'Église manichéenne*, 241–67 (252–7).

[132] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 141–2.

[133] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 154.

[134] In the original Greek text, God is the subject of *epoièsen (fecit)* and Christ is identified with *hamartia* (*peccatum*), which refers to the sin offering or scapegoat ritual in Lev. 16:21 (Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 145).

[135] This verse suffers from the same mistranslation as 2 Cor. 5:21.

the Lord.'[136] This text seems to suggest that Augustine sees Christ as playing the role of, or as acting on behalf of the old man (*ueterem hominem agere*). Christ's '*agere veterem hominem*' assured that the body of sin was emptied out (*ut euacuetur corpus peccati*). In order to explain this further, Augustine refers to Pauline texts which connect the death of believers in Christ to the mortification of sinful desires by the Spirit (Rom. 6:8; Gal. 5:24). But whether Christ's death on the cross is only a *similitudo* of our self-mortification, or that his death also counts as its constitutive ground, is not yet clarified in this passage. The following texts, however, suggest that the former interpretation is more likely.

In *De diuersis quaestionibus* 83 and the *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos* Augustine comments on Rom. 8:1–4: 'There is, then, no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has liberated me from the law of sin and death. For what was impossible to the law, because it was weakened by the flesh, [for that purpose] God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and from sin he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'[137] Augustine's comments on this verse in the works mentioned are almost identical, but differ in their treatment of the verse *de peccato comdemnauit peccatum in carne.* In *De diuersis quaestionibus* 83 Augustine first explains that 'the flesh' (*caro*) impeded the fulfilment of the law in us. The flesh stands for our delight in temporal things. Without grace this delight draws man towards sin, because there is no love of justice, which strengthens the mind to resist the delights of the flesh. God's salvific action is expressed in the sentence that follows. Being sent by God the Father, Christ comes 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (*in similitudine carnis peccati*[138]), and by sin he condemned sin in the flesh (*et de peccato damnauit peccatum in carne*). Augustine argues that Christ's assuming the 'likeness of sinful flesh' refers to his partial taking up of the punishment of sin. His flesh was not the flesh of sin

[136] *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4, CSEL 84,14: '*Manifestum est autem secundum eum nos agere ueterem hominem, qui maledictus est, propter quem peccatum et de domino dictum esse nemo ambigit.*'

[137] *exp. prop. Rm.* 47–8, CSEL 84,21: '*Nulla ergo condemnatio est nunc in his, qui sunt in Christo Iesu . . . Quod enim impossibile erat legi, in quo infirmabatur per carnem, deus filium suum misit in similitudine carnis peccati et de peccato damnauit peccatum in carne, ut iustitia legis impleretur in nobis, qui non secundum carnem ambulamus sed secundum spiritum [Rm. 8,3sq.]*; *diu. qu.* 66,6, CCL 44A,158–9: '*. . . lex enim spiritus uitae in Christo Iesu liberauit me a lege peccati et mortis.*'

[138] Against the Manichees who give a docetic interpretation to this phrase, Augustine affirms that the Son of God assumed a real human body and soul (on the real human soul of Christ, see *diu. qu.* 80,3). He differs from other humans, however, in two respects. First, he was not born from *delectatio carnalis* and therefore did not suffer from *concupiscentia.* Second, Christ did not bear a mortal body against his will, but subjected himself to mortality voluntarily (cf. *Gn. adu. Man.* 1,8,14; *diu. qu.* 80,3). See Mayer, *Die Zeichenlehre*, 216–25.

in the sense that Christ is himself not a sinner, as he had not been born from carnal delight.[139] Therefore, he does not share the punishment of concupiscence with other humans. Nonetheless, his flesh resembled the flesh of the sin, as he assumed a mortal body, which is the punishment for Adam's sin.[140] In this body Christ performed his work of redemption, which is indicated in the words 'by sin he condemned sin in the flesh'. Cameron has observed that the original subject of the sentence in Greek has changed in Augustine's Latin translation from God the Father to Christ.[141] In the Greek text, Christ is the object of God's condemnation of sin in the flesh, whereas in Augustine's translation, Christ is the one who condemns sin in the flesh: 'But what did the Lord do? By sin he condemned sin in the flesh, that is by taking on the flesh of man the sinner and teaching how we should live, he condemned sin in the flesh itself.'[142] Cameron argues that, whereas the Greek text identifies Christ and sin as the object of God's punishment (implying that Christ somehow bears the sin of man in the flesh), Augustine's Latin translation separates Christ from sin by saying that Christ is the one who condemns sin by assuming a mortal body (which Paul indicates with the word 'sin', using the *cause pro effectu* trope), and by showing us how we should live. Cameron concludes that Augustine still regards the work of Christ on the cross as a moral example, rather than as a redemptive suffering in which he takes away the punishment that humanity deserved.[143] I think this is correct to the extent that Augustine emphasizes at this point the psychological effect of Christ's life and death upon his followers. By assuming a mortal body and living a righteous life in that body until he died, he taught his followers not to be driven by carnal desires and the fear of death. This depiction of Christ's death still echoes the exemplary approach that characterized Augustine's understanding of the life and death of Christ up to this point in his theological development.[144]

This interpretation is confirmed by Augustine's exegesis of Rom. 8:1–4 in *exp. prop. Rm.* 48. In this passage, Augustine's explanation of Christ's

[139] Dominic Keech (*The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396–430* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83) observes that this is the first place where Augustine explains Christ's non-implication in sinful desire from the fact that he was born from a virgin.

[140] *diu. qu.* 66,6, CCL 44A,159: '*Non enim caro peccati erat, quae non de carnali delectatione nata erat, sed tamen inerat in ea similitudo carnis peccati, quia mortalis caro erat. Mortem autem non meruit Adam nisi peccato*.'

[141] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 145.

[142] *diu. qu.* 66,6, CCL 44A,159: '*Sed quid fecit dominus? De peccato damnauit peccatum in carne [Rm. 8,3], id est suscipiendo carnem hominis peccatoris, et docendo quemadmodum uiueremus, peccatum in ipsa carne damnauit, ut aeternorum caritate spiritus flagrans non duceretur captiuus in consensionem libidinis*.'

[143] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 146–7.

[144] McWilliam Dewart, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross', 23–5.

redemptive act, expressed by the words *de peccato damnauit peccatum in carne*, reads the following:

> Our Liberator the Lord Jesus Christ, by taking up mortal flesh, came in the likeness of the flesh of sin. For death is the wages of the flesh of sin. But surely the Lord's death was an act of good will, not the payment of a debt. Yet nonetheless here too the Apostle calls Christ's assumption of mortal flesh 'sin', even though he was without sin, because the immortal one as it were commits sin (*tamquam peccatum facit*), when he dies. But 'by sin', Paul says, 'he condemned sin in the flesh'. For this is what the death of the Lord accomplished, that death might not be feared and as a result of this, temporary goods might no longer be sought for, nor temporal evils shunned, in which things the wisdom of the flesh was at work, through which the precepts of the law could not be fulfilled.[145]

Although it is not entirely clear what Augustine means when he says that Christ the immortal one 'as it were committed sin when he died',[146] he clearly communicates the following logic of redemption: death is the wages of our sin. Christ, through his death, paid these wages without owing them. The effect of this should be that those who believe in Christ are no longer led by the desires of the mortal flesh (the *prudentia carnis*). Augustine does not clarify, however, how this effect is accomplished. He still seems to interpret the tranquil death of Christ as somehow inspiring us to temper the desires of our mortal flesh.

Contra Adimantum 21 indicates a clear change in Augustine's thought. Augustine addresses the text: '*Cursed is everyone who has been hanged upon a tree* (*Dt.* 21:23)', as he had done before in *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4, but now in

[145] *exp. prop. Rm.* 48, CSEL 84,21–2: '*Ideo liberator noster dominus Iesus Christus suscipiendo mortalem carnem uenit in similitudine carnis peccati. Carni enim peccati mors debita est. At uero illa mors domini dignationis fuit, non debiti, et tamen hoc quoque apostolus peccatum uocat susceptionem mortalis carnis quamuis non peccatricis, ideo quia immortalis tamquam peccatum facit, cum moritur. Sed de peccato inquit, damnauit peccatum in carne [Rm. 8,3]. Id enim egit mors domini, ne mors timeretur et ex eo iam non appeterentur temporalia bona nec metuerentur temporalia mala, in quibus carnalis erat prudentia illa, in qua impleri legis praecepta non poterant*' (translation: Frederiksen, *Augustine on Romans*, 19).

[146] Augustine takes this expression from his mistranslated version of 2 Cor. 5:21 where, according to the Greek text, Christ is said to have been made sin by God for us. Instead, Augustine reads that Christ himself committed sin (*fecit peccatum*). Augustine interprets Christ's committing of sin as a way of speaking about Christ's death. His death can be called 'sin', as it goes against the nature of the immortal one to die. Another interpretation that Augustine gives of the text is that death itself might be called sin, because it resulted from sin (it is a metonymy of the type *causa pro effectu*). Later, Augustine identifies '*de peccato*' with the sin of those who put Christ to death (see e.g. *s.* 152,10). He also corrected his reading of 2 Cor. 5:21, making God the Father the subject of *fecisse peccatum* and Christ the object. Christ was made sin in the sense of the Old Testament sin-offering, in which the sins of the people were transferred to the animal victim (e.g. *s.* 134,4,5; 152,11; *ep.* 140,30,73). Cf. G. Partoens and A. Dupont, '"De quo peccato?" Augustine's Exegesis of Rom. 8:3c in *Sermo* 159, 9–11', *Vigiliae Christianae* 66/2 (2012), 190–212 (esp. 193–4, 209); J. Patout Burns, 'How Christ Saves', in *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.*, edited by Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 193–210 (199–200).

relation to Christ's saying that everyone who wants to be perfect must take up his cross and follow him (Matt. 16:24, 19:21). Adimantus used this text to prove the opposition between the Old and the New Testament. In Deut. 21:23 someone who hangs on the tree is cursed, whereas in Matt. 16:24 the person who takes up his cross to follow Jesus is blessed. Augustine answers that Moses' curse is announced against the old man (*uetus homo*) whom the Lord hanged upon the tree. This old man is the old life (*uetus uita*) which we contracted from Adam, 'the flesh with its passions and desires' (Gal. 5:24).[147] Augustine also refers to this old life in Adam with the word 'death'. By this word he seems to refer to the entire reality of man's deviation from God, as he says that this death came to man from the devil through the woman. The word, therefore, seems to apply to both spiritual and corporeal death, with which Adam and Eve were punished after giving in to the temptation of the devil. It is to this death, Augustine continues, that Moses' curse applies. Repeating his earlier statement in *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4, Augustine argues that Moses' curse did not apply to Christ himself, but to the death of the old man that Christ took upon himself when he hung on the cross.[148] By doing so as the sinless one, Christ annulled this death (*quam [mortem] dominus noster suscipiendo euacuauit*). Augustine substantiates this thesis by referring to Rom. 6:6: 'Our old man was nailed to the cross along with him in order that the body of sin might be cancelled out (*euacuetur corpus peccati*).' And a few lines further down he quotes Gal. 3:13: 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us. As it is written: cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'[149] These texts clearly illustrate that Augustine sees Christ in his death as representatively assuming the punishment that sinful humanity deserved. In Christ our entire old self has been destroyed on our behalf. Thus, Christ becomes the mediator of life, as the serpent was the mediator of death.[150] In order to illustrate how Christ's death benefits Christians, Augustine refers to the serpent that Moses elevated in the desert to signify the death of Christ. Just as those who were poisoned by the serpents were immediately

[147] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,180: '*Qui autem Iesu Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum passionibus concupiscentiis [Gal. 5,24]. Tali enim cruce uetus homo, id est uetus uita perimitur, quam de Adam traximus, ut quod in illo fuit uoluntarium, in nobis fieret naturale. Quod ostendit apostolus dicens: fuimus et nos aliquando natura filii irae sicut et ceteri [Eph. 2,3] . . . Si ergo uetus uita de Adam, unde et nomine ueteris hominis uetus uita signatur*.'

[148] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,180: '*Non ergo dominus per linguam Moysi famuli dei, sed mors ipsa meruit maledictum quam dominus noster suscipiendo euacuauit. Mors itaque illa pependit in ligno, quae per mulierem ad hominem serpentina persuasione peruenit*.'

[149] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,181: '*Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum. scriptum est enim: maledictus omnis, qui pendet in ligno [Gal. 3,13]*.'

[150] The opposition between Christ as mediator of life (by his humility) and the devil as mediator of death (by his pride) is a theme that often recurs in Augustine. See Gerard Remy, *Le Christ Mediateur dans l'œuvre de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Atelier Reproduction des theses université de Lille, 1977), 46–52; 371–98.

healed by looking at the serpent on the tree, we are healed from 'deadly desires' through faith (*per fidem*) in the cross of Christ.[151] The destruction of the 'old life from Adam' in us is not simply a matter of imitation, but of appropriation of what is already a reality in Christ. And this appropriation takes place through faith in Christ and love for him.[152] According to Augustine, this is what Christ referred to when he described the way to perfection as a taking up of our cross after him: it is the personal appropriation of what has happened to human nature in Christ on the cross. The result of this is that we crucify the flesh with its passions and desires in ourselves (Gal. 5:24).[153]

The *Expositio Episulae ad Galatas* provides us with a second clear passage on Christ's representative bearing of the curse of the law.[154] In paragraph 21, Augustine had commented on Gal. 3:10–12 where Paul contrasts the righteousness that is through the law and the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. The former consists of an outward obedience based on the fear of temporal punishment, whereas the righteousness that is received through faith consists of real love for God (God is enjoyed instead of used for temporal rewards). How did Christ's work on the cross enable believers to acquire this kind of righteousness? Augustine argues that Christ, in order to give freedom to those who believe, did not observe the commandments of the law of Moses according to the letter (*ad litteram*), but according to their spiritual meaning. Thus he incited the hatred of carnal people, who executed him as a transgressor of the law. In this way he took upon himself the punishment (*suscepit poenam*[155]), which was laid down for those who did not observe the

[151] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,181: '*Unde etiam serpentem ad significationem ipsius mortis Moyses in heremo exaltauit in ligno. Et quoniam a mortiferis cupiditatibus per fidem sanamur crucis domini qua cruce mors ligno suspensa est, propterea qui serpentum morsibus uenenabantur, conspecto serpente, qui fixus erat atque exaltatus in ligno, continuo sanabantur.*'

[152] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,181: '*Suscipiendo autem ignominiosissimum apud homines mortis genus dominus noster Iesus Christus, hoc est mortem crucis commendauit nobis dilectionem suam, ut merito apostolus diceret accendens nos ad eius caritatem: Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis, factus pro nobis maledictum. Scriptum est enim: maledictus omnis, qui pendet in ligno [Gal. 3,13], ut non solum nullam mortem, sed etiam nullum mortis genus christiana libertas sicut Iudaica seruitus formidaret.*'

[153] *c. Adim.* 21, CSEL 25,1,180: '*Illa [crucem] tollitur, cum sequimur dominum, de qua dicit apostolus: qui autem Iesu Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum passionibus concupiscentiis [Gal. 5,24].*'

[154] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 151ff. Cameron argues that Augustine discovered a new approach to soteriology through his reading of Galatians. He writes on p. 151: 'Augustine's take-away insight from reading Galatians was that salvation *not only accommodated to historical events, but salvation itself was essentially historical.*' Cameron is of the opinion that Augustine's reading of Galatians precedes *c. Adim.* 21 (*Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 322–3 note 65), so that his views in *c. Adim.* 21 depend upon those in *exp. Gal.*. I leave this matter unresolved here, as it is of minor importance to my project, and I stick to the order of the *Retractationes* in which *c. Adim.* precedes Augustine's commentaries on the letters of Paul.

[155] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere,* 154 notes that Augustine uses the word *suscipere* with *poena* as its object for the first time in the *Expositio Epistulae ad Galatas.* In earlier writings he only used it in relation to the Incarnation (*suscipere hominem; naturam humanam; humanam*

commandments of the law. He did so, Augustine explains, to liberate those who believe in him from the fear of punishment.[156]

But does this mean that Christ has merely liberated his people from an external punishment (death), but not from sin itself? This is clearly not what Augustine means. As in *c. Adim.* it is the entire old man who has been condemned in Christ. Augustine continues his discussion by commenting on Gal. 3:13: 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, as it is written: cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'[157] Augustine argues that there are two aspects to Christ's having been made a curse for us. First of all, Christ took upon himself our death, the punishment of the sin of the first man. Consequently, in the death of the Lord, death itself was cursed and conquered. Secondly, the cause of death, namely sin itself, was cursed in Christ. Augustine relies on several biblical texts to substantiate this thesis. Of Christ it is said that 'he bore our sins in his body upon the cross' (1 Pet. 2:24) and 'what else hung on the tree than the sin of the old man, which the Lord received for us in the very mortality of his flesh?'[158] Augustine then cites 2 Cor. 5:21 in combination with Rom. 8:3: 'God made him to be sin for us, adding: that by sin he might condemn sin.'[159] Christ thus assumes the identity of the old man and this old man is put to death in him, so that all who believe in Him can be healed from the dominion of sin. Augustine summarizes this idea in the following sentence: 'For our old man was not crucified at the same time, as the same apostle says elsewhere, unless in this death of the Lord hangs a figure of our sin, so that the body of sin would be emptied out, so that we would no longer serve sin.'[160]

This passage poses a new question, however. Does Augustine mean that Christ really procured salvation for us, or is his death merely an outward

carnem). For an overview of the different uses of *suscipere* with regard to the Incarnation, see Pierre-Marie Hombert, 'La Christologie des trente-deux premières *Enarrationes in Psalmos* de saint Augustin', in *Augustin philosophe et prédicateur: hommage à Goulven Madec. Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011*, edited by Isabelle Bochet (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 432–63 (438).

[156] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,81: '*Unde etiam cum sabbato esurientes discipuli spicas euulsissent, respondit indignantibus dominum esse filium hominis etiam sabbati. Itaque illa carnaliter non obseruando carnalium conflagrauit inuidiam et suscepit quidem poenam propositam illis, qui ea non obseruassent, sed ut credentes in se talis poenae timore liberaret, quo pertinet, quod adiungit: Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis factus pro nobis maledictum, quia scriptum est: maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno [Gal. 3,13].*'

[157] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,82: '*Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis factus pro nobis maledictum quia scriptum est: maledictus omnis, qui pendet in ligno.*'

[158] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,83: '*Quid autem pependit in ligno nisi peccatum ueteris hominis, quod dominus pro nobis in ipsa carnis mortalitate suscepit?*'

[159] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,83: '*Unde nec erubuit nec timuit apostolus dicere peccatum eum fecisse pro nobis addens: ut de peccato condemnaret peccatum.*'

[160] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,83: '*Non enim et uetus homo noster simul crucifigeretur, sicut idem apostolus alibi dicit, nisi in illa morte domini peccati nostri figura penderet, ut euacuaretur corpus peccati, ut ultra non seruiamus peccato.*'

image (*figura*) of an inner reality, which has no intrinsic connection to the believer's salvation (as was also the question in the case of *exp. prop. Rm.* 32–4)? This has been argued by Philip Cary with regard to Augustine's understanding of Christ's death as a sacrament of man's inner transformation. He argues that 'for Augustine Christ is a sacrament that does not effect what it signifies'.[161] However, there are clear indications in the text that suggest that Augustine indeed regards the death of Christ as a sign that effects what it signifies in those who believe. This becomes clear from the comparison that Augustine makes between the serpent that Moses elevated in the desert and the cross of the Christ. Immediately after the sentence on Christ's crucifixion as a figure of our sin, Augustine writes: 'It was also in a figure of this sin and death that Moses in the desert lifted up the serpent on a tree. For it was by a serpent's persuasion that humanity fell into the condemnation of death. And so it was fitting for a serpent to be lifted up on a tree as a sign of that death, for in that figure the death of the Lord was hanging on a tree.'[162] By elevating this serpent on a tree, Moses, as it were, condemned the evil that the serpent represented. By looking at this serpent, all those who were bitten and were going to die (*morituri erant*) participated in this 'condemnation' and consequently were healed. Christ has brought the reality of what the serpent on the tree only signified (the condemnation of Satan, sin, and death): 'Death is cursed, sin is cursed, the serpent is cursed, and all these things are triumphed over in the cross.'[163] Therefore, all who look to Christ in faith are justified (*ex fide iustificat Christus credentes in se*) and consequently set free from the fear of death, through which sin exercised its power. This justification effects the believer's liberation from the curse of the law. He no longer needs to be held back from sin by the threat of punishment, but is open to the teachings of the Spirit.[164] As Cameron has observed, Augustine's understanding of Christ's death is both a real performance of the conquering of death and sin and a sign or sacrament of what happens within believers through the work of the Spirit.[165]

[161] Philip Cary, *Outward Signs*, 244. The author comments on passages from *De Trinitate*, books 4 and 13, but his critique could also be applied to the passage that is discussed in this paragraph, as Augustine calls the cross of Christ a *sacramentum libertatis* and the Lord's death *peccati nostri figura.*

[162] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,83: '*In eius peccati et mortis figura etiam Moyses in heremo super lignum exaltauit serpentem. persuasione quippe serpentis homo in damnationem mortis cecidit. itaque serpens ad significationem ipsius mortis conuenienter in ligno exaltatus est, in illa enim figura mors domini pendebat in ligno*.'

[163] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,84: '*Maledicta autem mors, maledictum peccatum, maledictus serpens, et haec omnia in cruce triumphata sunt. maledictus igitur omnis qui pendet in ligno [Gal. 3,13]*.'

[164] *exp. Gal.* 22, CSEL 84,84: '*Ergo non ex operibus legis sed ex fide iustificat Christus credentes in se, timor maledictionis crucis ablatus est, caritas benedictionis Abrahae propter exemplum fidei permanet ad gentes. Ut annuntiationem, inquit, spiritus per fidem accipiamus [Gal. 3,14], id est, ut non, quod timetur in carne, sed quod spiritu diligitur, crediturus annuntietur*.'

[165] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 156–8. Basil Studer ('"Sacramentum et Exemplum" chez saint Augustin', *Recherches augustiniennes* 10 (1975), 87–141 (99)) has

The last passage from Augustine's commentaries on Paul that illuminates his understanding of the death of Christ is *Ad Simplicianum* 1,17. In this passage, Augustine comments on Romans 7:4: 'You are dead to the law through the body of Christ.'[166] This text seems to depict the law as something negative, whereas Paul says that the law is good (Rom. 7:16). Augustine argues, however, that Paul intends to say here that we are redeemed from the punishment of the law (*supplicium legis*). Without Christ the law could only administer death to those to which it was given, because they could not but transgress its requirements and therefore deserved condemnation. However, through the death of Christ we have been redeemed from the disposition (*affectus*) that the law punishes and condemns.[167] We are dead to the punishment of the law through the body of Christ, 'through which the debts that bound people to a righteous punishment have been forgiven'.[168] In other words, in Christ the old man, which deserved condemnation because of his sins, has been done away with, and through Christ's resurrection, the new man has come to life who is enabled to fulfil the law through the Spirit of Christ, who pours the love of God into our hearts (Rom. 5:5).[169]

Enarratio 1 in *Psalmum* 21

In the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* Augustine also expands upon his view of Christ as the one who takes up our humanity in order to transform it through his death and resurrection. He does so by reading the Psalms according to the rhetorical device of *prosopopeia.*[170] Prosopopeia means that the speaker or writer plays the role of another person. According to Augustine, Christ is the speaker of the Psalms, but he plays different roles. Sometimes he speaks in the person of the Church, sometimes he speaks in his own person. Fundamental to this idea is the marital union between Christ and the Church.[171]

demonstrated how Augustine understands all the paschal events as together constituting the one sacrament of the believers' transformation, the *sacramentum nouae uitae.*

[166] *Simpl.* 1,17, CCL 44,22: '*Mortui estis legi . . . per corpus Christi.*'

[167] *Simpl.* 1,17, CCL 44,22: '*Quia mortui sumus legi dominanti, liberati ab eo adfectu quem lex punit et damnat.*'

[168] *Simpl.* 1,17, CCL 44,22: '*Mortui estis supplicio legis, per corpus Christi, per quod sunt delicta donata, quae legitimo supplicio constringebant.*'

[169] *Simpl.* 1,17.

[170] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 179–85.

[171] Augustine derives this idea from Eph. 5:30–1 where Paul compares the relationship between Christ and the Church to the bond of marriage. He argues that Christ has married human nature to himself, so that he and his Church became two in one flesh (*duo in carne una*). It is this intimate union of Christ and the Church that Augustine expressed in his famous *totus Christus* concept. Augustine uses this concept as a hermeneutical tool to interpret the Psalms. Helpful studies include: E. Franz, *Totus Christus. Studien über Christus und die Kirche bei Augustin* (Inaug. Diss. Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität, Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät; Bonn, 1956); T. J. van Bavel en B. Bruning, 'Die Einheit des *Totus Christus* bei Augustinus', in *Scientia Augustiniana. Festschrift für A. Zumkeller,* edited by Cornelius Peter

By assuming human nature, the Son of God united himself to Church, so that what is hers becomes his and what is his can become hers. Christ lets the sins of his bride be credited to him and takes upon himself the punishment that she deserved, but endows her with his perfection through his life and resurrection. *En.* 1 *in Ps.* 21 gives a good, albeit incipient, illustration of how this works in Augustine's exegesis of the Psalms.[172] First, we encounter Christ speaking in the person of the old man; then we encounter him as speaking in his own person, as sinless man and head of the Church.[173]

Augustine argues that 'the words of this psalm are spoken in the person of the crucified one, for at the beginning of this psalm we hear the cry he uttered while he hung upon the cross, yet redeeming (*seruans*) the person of the old man, whose mortality he bore. For our old man was nailed with him on the cross.'[174] In this passage Augustine says that Christ in his person identifies himself with the person of the old man. He then continues to explain the first words of the psalm as the sinful words of the old Adam with whom Christ identifies himself. In the person of Adam, Christ says: '*O God, my God, look to me; why have you forsaken me, being far from my salvation? The words of my sins.*' Augustine explains these words as follows: 'Our old self, nailed to the cross with Christ, is speaking here, ignorant even of the reason why God has abandoned it…' Subsequently, Augustine explains what the words of this old man sound like. The psalm reads: '*O my God, I will cry to you all day, and you will not listen to me.*' According to Augustine this means: 'My God, I will cry to you when things are going well in this life, to ask that my prosperity may not change; but you will not listen to me, because these cries are part of the words of my sins.' The psalm continues: '*…and [I will cry to you] in the night, but you will not collude with my foolishness*'. Augustine comments:

Mayer and Willigis Eckermann (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1975), 43–75; Tarsicius J. van Bavel, 'The "Christus totus" Idea' in *Augustinian Spirituality and the Charism of the Augustinians*, edited by J. E. Rotelle (Villanova, Pa: Augustinian Press, 1995), 59–70; Joseph Cyrillus, *'Totus Christus' in Saint Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (Pars dissertationis ad lauream. Pontificia Facultas Theologica 35, Teresiae a Jesu et Joannis a Cruce in Urbe; Trivandrum (India): St. Joseph's Press, 1966); W. S. Babcock, *The Christ of the Exchange: A Study of Augustine's Enarrationes in Psalmos* (Doctoral Dissertation, Yale University, 1971).

[172] See for an analysis of Augustine's exegesis of this psalm, M. Dulaey, 'L'Interprétation du Psaume 21 (TM 22) chez saint Augustin', in *David, Jésus et la reine Esther. Recherches sur le Psaume 21 (22 TM)*, edited by Gilles Dorival (Louvain: Peeters, 2002), 315–40; Bettina Wellmann, *Von David, Königin Ester und Christus. Psalm 22 im Midrasch, Tehillim und bei Augustin* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 163–322.

[173] Wellmann, *Von David*, 206–7.

[174] *en. Ps.* 21,1,1, CCL 38,117: '*Dicuntur autem ista ex persona crucifixi. nam de capite Psalmi huius sunt uerba quae ipse clamauit cum in cruce penderet, personam etiam seruans ueteris hominis, cuius mortalitatem portauit. Nam uetus homo noster confixus est cruci cum illo*.'

> … for in this life's misfortunes I will cry to you to make things prosper for me, and likewise you will not listen. You refuse, not to drive me to further folly, but that I may have wisdom to know what you truly want me to pray for: not to ask in sinful words prompted by longing for temporal life, but in the words of one converted to you and tending to eternal life.[175]

In these words, Christ assumes the identity of the old man on our behalf, and as it were confesses our sins on our behalf.

Simultaneously, Christ speaks out of his own person (*non ex persona Adam loquens, sed ego proprie Jesus Christus*), as the sinless man and head of the Church. The psalm depicts him as the righteous and humble Israelite, whom God 'drew out of the womb of his mother' (vs. 10), that is from the Jewish synagogue. The Jewish synagogue stands for the people of Israel who 'trusted for their salvation in the material observance of the Sabbath and circumcision and the like'.[176] In contrast to them, Christ is depicted as the humble one who expects his salvation only from the Lord. Augustine sees Christ as the new man (*ego proprie*), who assumed the person of the old man (*in persona ueteris hominis*), among a people that lived the life of the old man.[177] They rejected him, but in this rejection God himself brought Christ 'down among the ungodly condemned to die'[178], and exercised his judgement over the old man whom he represented. But as Christ himself was the new man, death did not

[175] *en. Ps.* 21,1,2–3, CCL 38,117: '*Deus, deus meus, respice me, quare me dereliquisti longe a salute mea? [Ps. 21,2] Longe factus a salute mea; quoniam longe est a peccatoribus salus. Verba delictorum meorum [Ps. 21,2]. Nam haec uerba sunt non iustitiae, sed delictorum meorum. Uetus enim homo confixus cruci loquitur, etiam causam ignorans quare eum dereliquerit deus. Aut certe: longe a salute mea sunt uerba delictorum meorum [Ps. 21,2].*' *en. Ps.* 21,1,3, CCL 38,117: '*Deus meus, clamabo ad te per diem, nec exaudies [Ps. 21,3]. Deus meus, clamabo ad te in rebus prosperis huius uitae, ut non mutentur; nec exaudies, quia uerbis delictorum meorum ad te clamabo. Et nocte, et non ad insipientiam mihi [Ps. 21,3]. Et in aduersis utique huius uitae clamabo ut prosperentur, et similiter non exaudies. Neque hoc facis ad insipientiam mihi, sed potius ut sapiam quid clamare me uelis; non uerbis delictorum ex desiderio temporalis uitae, sed uerbis conuersionis ad te in uitam aeternam*' (translation: WSA 3/15,221).

[176] *en. Ps.* 21,1,10, CCL 38,118: '*Quisquis in carnali obseruatione sabbati et circumcisionis ceterorumque talium salutem ponit*' (translation: WSA 3/15, 223). Augustine also identifies the womb from which Jesus was born with the Jewish people in *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,37. See also *exp. Gal.* 8 where Augustine explains Gal. 1:15 (*me segregatuit ab utero matris*) as referring to God separating Paul from the blind habit of his parents after the flesh.

[177] In *en. Ps.* 21,1,4 Augustine writes that Adam sinned by seeking his own glory (*quaerere suam gloriam*). Likewise, he refers to Christ's mockers at the cross as 'the proud who lift themselves up as one, unwilling to have anyone else alongside them' (*superbi se singultariter erigentes consortesque non ferentes*). These are the people whose prayers God does not hear, because they cry to him with sinful words (*uerbis delictorum clamans ad deum* (*en. Ps.* 21,1,25)). This verse recalls Augustine's characterization of the old man in 21,1,2–3 as the one who cries to God with sinful words (*uerba delictorum*). Augustine thus identifies the Jewish people with Adamic humanity in its rebellion against God. Christ is the one who is rejected by this old man, but at the same time assumes the role of this old man in his death on the cross, so that the old life is done away with for the sake of those who put their hope in the name of the Lord (*en. Ps.* 21,1,24).

[178] *en. Ps.* 21,1,16.

consume him, but brought him to perfection, like a vessel in the furnace.[179] The old man was done away with, and the new man was raised to life.

De libero arbitrio 3

In *De libero arbitrio* 3,30 Augustine takes the *exemplum*-approach to the work of Christ. In this paragraph he discusses the fall of man through the persuasion of the devil. Through this fall man has lost the nourishment of the Word, which he shared with the angels, and has been made captive to death, so that he must toil to receive the nourishment that he needs.[180] Therefore, the Word has made itself visible to us, so that it might recall (*reuocaret*) us from the pursuit of visible things (which is the same as being captive to the bonds of death) to its divine nature, which is the true nourishment of rational creatures. 'In this way the soul discovers him outwardly as humble whom it had inwardly abandoned in its pride, and by imitating his visible humility, the soul will return to his invisible majesty.'[181] This approach to the work of Christ recalls similar accounts from *De musica* and other writings and will extensively recur in the *Confessions.*[182]

In the next paragraph (3,31), however, Augustine takes another approach to the work of Christ. He depicts Christ as the one who lays the juridical basis needed to set man free from the rule of the devil and to give him eternal life. At the beginning of history the devil became the ruler of humanity. He acquired this position not by force, but through persuasion. Man consented to the suggestion of the devil to rebel against God and thus became a servant of the devil, subject to evil demands and desires.[183] Augustine emphasizes that the devil's rule over humanity is a consequence of man's free choice, as otherwise man would have been the victim of the devil's violence and be unaccountable for his sins.[184] It is precisely man's voluntary choice to side with the devil that gives the devil his power over him. On this basis, the devil is entitled to accuse man before God and to demand from God that man be condemned together with him and his angels.[185] 'When the woman was deceived and the man had fallen through the women, [the devil] claimed the entire offspring of the first man as a sinner guilty of death, certainly with a malicious desire to kill, but nonetheless according to the most fair justice.'[186]

[179] *en. Ps.* 21,1,16. [180] For the theme of intellectual nourishment, see *duab. an.* 19.

[181] *lib. arb.* 3,30, CSEL 74,116: '*Sic eum anima quem superbiens intus reliquerat foris humilem inuenit, imitatura eius humilitatem uisibilem et ad inuisibilem altitudinem reditura.*'

[182] *mus.* 6,7; *f. et symb.* 6; *diu. qu.* 69,9. Cf. McWilliam Dewart, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross', 19.

[183] *lib. arb.* 3,31. [184] *lib. arb.* 3,29. [185] *lib. arb.* 3,28; *lib. arb.* 3,31.

[186] *lib. arb.* 3,31, CSEL 74,116: '*Femina decepta et deiecto per feminam uiro omnem prolem primi hominis tamquam peccatricem legibus mortis, malitiosa quidem nocendi cupiditate sed tamen iure aequissimo, uindicabat.*'

The power that the devil exercises over humanity, then, is primarily the legal power of a prosecutor. Moreover, he is the one who received the task to execute God's punishment over human sin, namely temporal death. By inspiring man with the fear of this death, the devil holds him captive to his earth-bound desires and thus to eternal death, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.[187]

God could not simply set humanity free from their alignment with the devil, because they had made the choice themselves and therefore *deserved* to be given over to the devil and be sent to hell eventually with him. If God deprived the devil of his power by violent intervention (*violentia dominatu*), he would violate the rules of his own justice (according to which the devil could claim rights over humanity). The devil had the right to demand man's punishment from God on the basis of the fact that man had chosen his side. Therefore, in order to deprive the devil of his power, God had to proceed according the law of justice (*lex iustitiae*), and he did so in Jesus Christ. Christ assumed a human nature, free, however, from the evil desires with which the rest of humanity is born. Nor did he commit any sin during his life. Therefore, the devil had no ground to accuse Christ of guilt and to demand his death. Nonetheless, he executed Christ as if he were a sinner.[188] Christ thus paid a debt (death), which he did not owe,[189] and because of this sacrifice, the devil loses his rights over those who believe in Christ. Christ has acquired the right to renew those who believe in him, to release them from sin and from the fear of death. Although they still have to pay the debt of temporal death, they do so as people who have been reconciled to God, so that temporal death becomes the way to eternal life. 'It is then, a matter of strict justice that the devil is forced to release all those who believe in Him whom he put to death so unjustly, so that these believers, in that they die temporally, pay their debt, and in that they live for all eternity, they live in Him who paid a debt for them, which He himself did not owe. Those, however, whom the devil persuaded to persevere in unbelief, he has as his companions in eternal damnation.'[190]

[187] *lib. arb.* 3,29; *exp. prop. Rm.* 51.

[188] *lib. arb.* 3,31, CSEL 74,116: '*[diabolus] interficeret iustum, in quo nihil dignum morte posset ostendere, non solum quia sine crimine occisus est sed etiam quia sine libidine natus.*'

[189] *lib. arb.* 3,31, CSEL 74,117: '*. . . pro eis quod non debebat exsoluit.*' Cf. *lib. arb.* 3,44 where Augustine says that the soul must pay what it owes to the law of its Creator, either by doing justice, or by suffering misery.

[190] *lib. arb.* 3,31, CSEL 74,117: '*Iustissime itaque dimittere cogitur credentes in eum quem iniustissime occidit, ut et quod temporaliter moriuntur debitum exsoluant et quod semper uiuunt in illo uiuant qui pro eis quod non debebat exsoluit, quibus autem infidelitatis perseuerantiam persuasisset iuste secum haberet in perpetua damnatione consortes.*' TeSelle (*Augustine the Theologian*, 168–75) shows how Augustine develops the patristic ransom theory, which is often regarded as teaching that Christ paid a price to the devil in order to receive humanity back from him, as if they made an agreement. The theory rather expresses the legal dimension of the opposition between Christ and the devil. The devil exercised his rights of possession over humanity, because of human sin. Christ's regained the rights of possession not because he paid

Conclusion

What does Augustine's emphasis on the redemptive character of Christ's death add to his Christology thus far? Until around 394 Augustine understood redemption primarily as a cleansing of the effects of sin in the soul through the teaching of Christ and the inner work of the Holy Spirit. Through his ongoing polemic with the Manichees, Augustine had to reflect more deeply upon the meaning of Christ's bodily death and resurrection. He had always held to this dogma, but had not yet thought through its soteriological implications. Especially in his exegesis of Paul the development of his thought on this matter is tangible. With regard to our theme—the soteriological dimension of divine judgement—this involves a major development. Augustine comes to understand the death of Christ as the constitutive ground for man's redemption. From an example of fortitude, and an inspiration to kill the desires of the flesh, Christ's death becomes the representative payment of the punishment of sin, which constitutes the juridical ground for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of the will. He takes upon himself the penal state to which humanity was bound and from which it could not liberate itself, in order to communicate his own righteousness, without violating the laws of divine justice. In Christ, penal justice and restorative justice come together for the sake of the restoration of human nature. It is this fundamental idea that Augustine both expresses in his exegesis of Paul's theology of the cross, and in his understanding of Christ's work as a victory over Satan, as expounded in *De libero arbitrio* 3. By identifying himself with the guilty, and by sharing their punishment, namely death, he levels the juridical claim of sin and Satan over them. Thus the way is opened for them to fulfil the law through the Spirit and merit eternal salvation.

Systematically speaking Augustine thus espouses a form of penal substitution. What Augustine does not teach, however, is that Christ bore the final punishment of sin on the cross, the punishment of hell, in the place of sinners. This is a later development in the doctrine of penal atonement, which originated in the time of the Reformation, especially through Calvin's reinterpretation of Christ's descent into hell as his suffering of the eternal wrath of God on the cross in our stead. In Augustine's view, Christ identified with humanity's present penal situation, consisting of the dominion of sin, death, and devil, and thus broke the juridical power of evil over us, so that we can be forgiven and receive the Spirit of God to fulfil the law in the present and merit eternal life. God indeed exacted a penalty from Christ in order to redeem human nature from his wrath, but this was not a penalty that superseded the

the devil a price that he demanded, but because the devil abused his power by putting the righteous one to death. Thus he deprived himself of the rights of possession over those who are in Christ.

already existing penal situation of mankind itself. Christ took our temporal penalty upon himself, in order to gain the right to save the Church from eternal punishment at the end of time. In this regard, Augustine's understanding of penal substitution differs from later expressions of the doctrine in the Reformed tradition.[191]

One final observation with regard to the level of Augustine's development should be made here. McWilliam Dewart has argued that the changing emphasis in Augustine's Christology has to do with the development of his hamartology.[192] Augustine has arrived at the view that sin is deeply rooted in human nature (as a punishment for the first sin) and binds man unavoidably to divine punishment. This required a Christology in which Christ is more than a teacher, but needs to represent humanity before God, and suffer his curse over man's corrupted nature, in order to liberate humanity from its penal condition. Thus far my contention has been that Augustine's doctrine of sin does not change as much as McWilliam Dewart suggests. Nonetheless, through Augustine's rereading of Paul, the theme of humanity's bondage to sin and the devil moves to the foreground up to the point that Augustine comes to deny all synergism in the process of salvation (*Ad Simplicianum*). This changing emphasis largely coincides with the changing emphasis in Christology. Man's incorporation into Christ's body, through which he dies to the law and receives the Spirit of life, becomes the sole source of man's regeneration and perseverance.[193] The liberation of the will from its bondage to sin (its penal situation) is solely based upon the work of Christ on the cross.

[191] I make this point here in order to clarify the difference between Augustine and my own confessional position as a scholar standing in the Reformed tradition. This distinction is not sufficiently taken into account in the discussion of penal atonement in Augustine by Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007), 179ff. For further criticism of this book, see Derek Flood, 'Substitutionary Atonement and the Church Fathers: A Reply to the Authors of *Pierced for our Transgressions*', *Evangelical Quarterly* 82/2 (2010), 142–59. For the position that I defend here, see also Pierre-Marie Hombert, '"Le Christ s'est fait pour nous malédiction": l'interprétation patristique de Galates 3,13', in *L'Exegèse patristique de l'épître aux Galates*, edited by I. Bochet (Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 2014), 181–248 (241ff.). Hombert distinguishes Augustine's 'ontological' interpretation of Christ's bearing of the curse of the law from substitutionary interpretations. The former says that Christ redeemed humanity by sharing in humanity's present penal condition, thus conquering sin and death through his righteousness and life, whereas substitutionary interpretations adopt a more forensic framework, in which Christ pays a penalty that differs from our present penal condition, in order to compensate for our debts. This interpretation is rare in patristic literature. We should not forget, however, that the 'ontological' interpretation also functions within a forensic framework.

[192] McWilliam, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross', 31.

[193] McWilliam, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross', 31. The connection between Augustine's developing views on the work of Christ and his changing doctrine of grace in *Ad Simplicianum* is not explicitly drawn by Augustine himself, but can be inferred from his reasoning.

THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF DIVINE JUDGEMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We now turn again to the Christian life after baptism, and the function of God's law within it. In Chapters 2 and 3 I argued that Augustine held an ideal of sanctification which was genuinely Christian in that it presupposed a distinction between Creator and creature, the influence of sin, and the need for grace, but it was still understood as a progressive process towards perfection. The divine law exercised its disciplinary function within this framework. It helped man to acknowledge both the level of his progress and the extent to which he still had to grow in virtue. However, this model of sanctification was challenged from the earliest stage of Augustine's life as a Christian. His self-experience in the *Soliloquia* had made him aware of the unfathomability of his own subjectivity and of the effects of the sin that indwelled him. He had felt his own incapability to measure the extent of his own sanctification, and recognized his absolute need to entrust his sanctification to an omniscient and gracious Physician.

It is this aspect of Augustine's earlier reflections on Christian sanctification that moves to the foreground in his reflections on the Christian life from around 393. Christian sanctification becomes the desire for the fulfilment of God's promises, based upon the work of Christ. Not just the example of Christ, but Christ himself becomes the source of Christian sanctification. This becomes clear from how Augustine comes to speak about baptism. Baptism is the foundation of the Christian life, because through it the Christian is incorporated into Christ and receives the forgiveness of sins that Christ purchased on the cross. In Christ, evil has lost its binding power over man. Therefore, baptism forms the stable guarantee that sin has no abiding power in the Christian life. Whenever the building of the Christian life collapses through sin, it can be rebuilt upon the foundation that Christ has laid,[194] through a broken spirit and a humble calling upon the name of the Lord.[195] Christ is the high priest who is always heard by his Father in heaven, where he prays and offers his sacrifice on our behalf. Our strength then is to be found in the salvation that he graciously confers on us in our weakness.[196] It is because the Church is perfectly grounded in Christ that she can say: 'Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence' (Ps. 25:1). Only because she is in him, she shall not be moved.[197] In short, the Church's being in Christ constitutes the firm juridical ground for her justification and resurrection unto life. The beginning

[194] *ep. Rm. inch.* 19, CSEL 84,174: '*Eos enim, qui iam baptizati fuerint, quia renouatio in baptismo est, ubi quidem operatur paenitentia sed tamquam in fundamento. Manente itaque fundamento recuperari aedificium potest.*'

[195] *en. Ps.* 24,11. [196] *en. Ps.* 19,7–10. [197] *en. Ps.* 1,25,1.

of this process has already started through the Spirit, by whom the Church adheres to God in faith.[198]

It is in this framework that divine judgement exercises its disciplinary function. Augustine emphasizes that the forgiveness of sins does not imply that all penal justice has been abolished in the Christian life. On the contrary, the forgiveness of sins liberates man from the *dominion* of sin and death, and hence from eternal punishment, but does not abolish God's justice in the present time. God grants his peace to his children by upholding the demands of his justice, rather than by abolishing them, as unjust wordly judges do when they acquit criminals without exacting a penalty or requiring compensation for their misdeeds.[199] This idea shows the structural continuity between Augustine's Christology and his understanding of sanctification. Just as in Christ God saves human nature from damnation by fulfilling the demands of his justice (both penal and restorative), he sanctifies the Christian by fulfilling the demands of his justice. God does not abolish the law for those who are in Christ, but fulfils its righteousness in them through the grace of the Spirit. Neither does he remove the temporal penalties that his children deserve as descendants of Adam. Rather, he uses these penalties to discipline them in rigtheousness (*disciplina iustitiae*).[200] No longer are they mere expressions of his judgement over sin; they have become the instruments of his fatherly love for his children, by which he prepares them for the inheritance (Heb. 12:6).[201]

The two following sections address two forms of God's fatherly chastisement in the lives of his children. The first section addresses the disciplinary function of concupiscence in the Christian life. The second section addresses Augustine's discourse on the disciplinary function of temporal death and other kinds of temporal, bodily suffering.

[198] *exp. prop. Rm.* 53.

[199] *ep. Rm. inch.* 10, CSEL 84,158: '*Non sic accipiendam gratiam et pacem dei, cum dicitur, ut existiment homines a iustitia deum posse discedere. Nam et ipsam pacem cum poena, non reflectunt ad peccandum, sed ab omni labe penitus purgant.*'

[200] Augustine uses three different images to express God's use of punishment in the process of sanctification. On the basis of Heb. 12:6 and Prov. 3:12, he uses the image of God as a Father who chastises the sons he receives (*s. dom. m.* 1,63; *ep. Rm. inch.* 10; *diu. qu.* 82). Furthermore, he depicts God as a doctor who uses painful surgery in order to heal his patients (*diu. qu.* 82). Third, he depicts him as the Lord of his slaves, who punishes those who know his will more severely than those who do not know his will. Christians deserve to be punished more severely when they sin, because they know the will of the Lord, as opposed to those who are estranged from God (Luke 12:47) (*s. dom. m.* 1,63 and *ep. Rm. inch.* 18).

[201] For Augustine's use of the image of the *pater flagellans*, see De Bruyn, 'Pater Flagellans', 264–72.

The Disciplinary Function of Concupiscence

According to Augustine's fourfold scheme of the order of salvation (*ante legem—sub lege—sub gratia—in pacem*), believers *sub gratia* still suffer from concupiscence, but do not give in to it. Although sin still dwells in them, and they still have to fight against it, they seem to be continuously victorious.[202] This scheme suggests that a sinless life after conversion is possible. It still espouses an ideal of perfection in this life. Simultaneously, however, we encounter texts in which Augustine understands concupiscence as a much more influential power in the Christian life. These texts indicate that Augustine understands Christians as still struggling with weakness of will, so that they are regularly overcome by concupiscence.[203]

As indicated, the abiding power of concupiscence and habit in the Christian life assumes a pedagogical function. Its influence and entangling power deepens the Christian's awareness of his need for the grace of Christ. It challenges self-reliance and fosters humility and faith that boasts in the Lord only.[204] *Enarratio in Psalmum* 6 exemplifies this pedagogical understanding of concupiscence. It depicts the Christian who falls into sin and is refused a redemptive answer by God when he prays for help and renewal. He is left to the penal consequences of his own choice. However, this divine silence aims to convince the sinner of his utter dependence upon God's grace and to increase gratitude for divine forgiveness. In other words, God hides his face for a time, in order to test the Christian's faith in his Saviour.

In *Enarratio* 6 Augustine first says that the fear of judgement still plays a role in the Christian life. Having mentioned the condemnation of the ungodly at the day of judgement, Augustine says that the Church itself, in this Psalm,

[202] *exp. prop. Rm.* 35; *diu. qu.* 66,6.

[203] See *diu. qu.* 67,6; *s. dom. m.* 2,38. The tension between Augustine's ideal of perfection and his acknowledgement of the abiding influence of concupiscence becomes clear, for example, from inconsistencies in his exegesis of Rom. 7: 24 (*Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius?*) Usually, Augustine understands this cry as uttered by man *sub lege*, but sometimes he applies it to man *sub gratia,* indicating that this man still struggles with the discrepancy between willing and performing. Although Augustine has not yet arrived at his new exegesis of Rom. 7:22–5, according to which Paul is speaking about himself after his conversion, these inconsistencies hint at this future change. This observation is made by Martin, *Rhetoric and Exegesis*, 68; Harrison, *Rethinking*, 132; Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 195–6. For the development of Augustine's exegesis of these verses up until the *Confessions*, see Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 186–225. On the change in Augustine's exegesis of Romans 7 during the Pelagian controversy, see M.-F. Berrouard, 'L'Exégèse augustinienne de Rom. 7,7–25 entre 396 et 418', 101–96; Van Fleteren, 'Augustine's Evolving Exegesis of Romans 7:22–23', 89–114; R. Dodaro, '*Ego miser homo sum*: Augustine, the Pelagian Controversy and the Paul of Rom. 7:2–25', *Augustinianum* 44 (2004), 135–44. The continuing need for forgiveness of sins in the life of man *sub gratia* is further attested by the following texts from this period: *en. Ps.* 24,11; *en. Ps.* 24,18; *f. et symb.* 10,21; *ep. Rm. inch. Exp.* 18.

[204] Patout Burns, 'Augustine on the Origin and Progress of Evil', in *The Ethics of St. Augustine*, 82–3.

stands in fear of this condemnation (*quam damnationem metuens*). Therefore she prays to God: 'Lord do not accuse me in your anger . . . Do not reprove me in your fury.'[205] In these words the Church ponders its own merits and fears either to be condemned by God on the day of judgement, or to be purified from remaining weaknesses.[206] Therefore, the Church prays to God that he will heal her from sin in this life, so that she need not fear death, nor the hand of the doctor after death.[207] The author goes on to pray: 'Have mercy on me, Lord, because I am weak; heal me, Lord, because my bones are troubled. . . . and my soul is greatly perturbed.'[208] The writer prays to God to save him from the weakness (*infirmitas*) which he has inflicted upon himself through his sins.

However, God apparently refuses to fulfil the supplicant's prayer. Instead of coming to his help, he delivers the supplicant to the consequences of his sins. This leads the supplicant to the desperate exclamation: 'And you, Lord, how long [will you be angry]?'[209] Augustine goes on to argue, however, that this divine silence serves the pedagogy of salvation. He writes: 'Here, obviously, is a soul wrestling with its own diseases, but its treatment by the doctor is delayed, in order that it may be convinced how great are the evils into which it has launched itself by sinning . . . Therefore, God, to whom it is said, *And you Lord, how long?* is not to be reckoned as cruel but as a good persuader of the soul with regard to the evil it has occasioned for itself.'[210] The reason why God does not hear the supplicant is to convince him of the severity of his evil. The supplicant needs to know the deadly nature of his illness in order to beware the danger of falling back after he is cured.

Moreover, Augustine continues, God intends to persuade him of the fact that he does not *deserve* to be heard. Literally, Augustine says that the supplicant's prayer is not perfect enough as to hear the promise 'While you are still speaking I will say, "Behold, here I am"' (Isa. 65:24). In other words, through God's silence the supplicant learns that in and of himself he is as

[205] *en. Ps.* 6,3, CCL 38,29: '*Domine, ne in ira tua arguas me . . . nec in furore tuo corripias me.*'

[206] For Augustine's ideas on post-mortem purification and its connection to the doctrine of purgatory, see Joseph Ntedika, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du purgatoire chez saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966).

[207] *en. Ps.* 6,3, CCL 38,29: '*Quid ergo iste orat, qui non uult in ira domini uel argui uel emendari? Quid, nisi ut sanetur? Ubi enim sanitas est, nec mors metuenda est, nec urentis aut secantis medici manus.*'

[208] *en. Ps.* 6,3, CCL 38,29: '*Miserere mei, domine, quoniam infirmus sum; sana me, domine, quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea*' (translation: WSA 3/15, 105).

[209] Augustine also quotes this text in his struggle with *consuetudo* in *conf.* 8,28. Cf. Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 162.

[210] *en. Ps.* 6,4, CCL 39,30: '*Quis non intellegat significari animam luctantem cum morbis suis, diu autem dilatam a medico, ut ei persuaderetur in quae mala se peccando praecipitauerit? Quod enim facile sanatur, non multum cauetur; ex difficultate autem sanationis, erit diligentior custodia receptae sanitatis. Non ergo tamquam crudelis deus aestimandus est, cui dicitur: et tu, domine, usquequo [Ps. 6,4], sed tamquam bonus persuasor animae, quid mali sibi ipsa pepererit*' (translation: WSA 3/15, 106).

worthy of damnation as the ungodly who do not want to turn to God.[211] In this way, God brings him to despair. Left to himself, he will fall back into 'the blindness of the mind which captures and envelops the person who is sinning'.[212] This is the antechamber of hell, the irreversible 'outer darkness', which follows after the day of judgement.[213] The supplicant knows that only God can save him from this situation, but he also knows that he does not deserve God's help. If God dealt with him according to his merits, he would be without hope.

However, he also knows God as the one who has revealed himself as the redeemer of his people. The deepened awareness of his unworthy position before God therefore leads him to a deepened faith in God's mercy. It is this hope in God's mercy that he subsequently appeals to in his prayer: 'Save me, because of your mercy.' Augustine comments: 'He understands that it is not on his own merits that he is being healed, because a righteous condemnation is most certainly due to the sinner who transgresses the commandment as laid down. Heal me, therefore, says the psalmist, not in proportion to what I deserve, but in proportion to your mercy.'[214] God's temporary judgement, his temporarily giving over of a Christian to the power of sin and the fear of judgement, thus served to convince him of his own unworthiness before God, and to make him more fervently seek God in his mercy.

The Disciplinary Function of Corporeal Suffering

For Augustine, another way in which God puts the punishment of sin in the service of the Christian's sanctification, is by holding him subject to death and other corporeal evils resulting from the fall. Augustine uses the example of the martyrs to exemplify this theological idea. A rather new element in Augustine's reflections on the disciplinary effect of corporeal evils is his attention to the integrity of the body itself. Bodily suffering does not just direct our love to higher spiritual joys, but also to the hope of the resurrection, through which God restores the body itself to integrity.

With regard to death Augustine writes: 'Furthermore, the divine justice is of such a constancy that although the spiritual and eternal punishment will have been relaxed for the one who repents, nevertheless corporeal pressures and afflictions, by which (as we know) even the martyrs where exercised, and

[211] *en. Ps.* 6,4.

[212] *en. Ps.* 6,6, with reference to Rom. 1: 28: 'Because they did not see fit to acknowledge God, he gave them over to their own depraved way of thinking.'

[213] *en. Ps.* 6,8.

[214] *en. Ps.* 6,5, CCL 38,30: '*Intellegit non suorum meritorum esse quod sanatur, quandoquidem peccanti et datum praeceptum praetereunti, iusta damnatio debebatur. Sana me ergo, inquit, non propter meritum meum, sed propter misericordiam tuam.*'

eventually death itself, which our nature merited by sinning, will not be relaxed for anyone.'[215] Although the grace of God through Christ liberates from eternal death, it does not relax temporal corporeal afflictions and death. Augustine refers to the martyrs as the examples of this truth. Even they, the most righteous of all believers, had to undergo the corporeal afflictions that humans are subject to after the fall, either naturally or through the sinful deeds of others.

However, these troubles were used by God to discipline the martyrs in righteousness, to test whether their love of God would be stronger than their love of the body. God taught them to value their peace with God through faith over the peace of the body, in order to receive the peace of the body at the end of time. Augustine writes:

> Tribulations and troubles, when given through God's justice as retribution of sin, do not turn good and just men to sin. Their sins displease them more than any bodily pain, and these trials and tribulations purge them completely of every stain. For the peace of the body will be confirmed in due time, if now our spirit holds unshakably and unchangingly to the peace which the Lord has deigned to give us through faith.[216]

In his *Expositio Epistulae ad Galatas* 64 Augustine gives another illuminating example of the disciplinary meaning of God's retributive justice in a martyriological context. In Galatians 6:17 Paul writes that he bears the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in his body. Augustine argues that these marks (*stigmata*) refer to the brands that slaves received in their body as a punishment for misbehaviour. According to Augustine, Paul applies this term to the marks of punishment that came from the persecutions that he suffered as retribution for the offence of persecuting the churches of Christ. Paul had sinned against Christ by persecuting his people, and for these wrongs he received the punishment of persecution himself. However, his sins had been forgiven in baptism, and on that basis he had received the Spirit of adoption. This entailed that the temporal punishments he still deserved for his persecution of the churches of Christ would not destroy him, but rather would lead him to the crown of victory.[217] Christ used them to put the old Paul to death and

[215] *ep. Rm. inch.* 10, CSEL 84,157: '*Porro iustitiae diuinae tanta constantia est, ut cum poena spiritualis et sempiterna paenitenti fuerit relaxata, pressurae tamen cruciatusque corporales, quibus etiam martyres exercitatos nouimus, postremo mors ipsa, quam peccando meruit nostra natura, nulli relaxetur.*'

[216] *ep. Rm. inch.* 10, CSEL 84,157: '*Sed tribulationes et molestiae cum per iustitiam dei redduntur peccatis, bonos et iustos, et quibus iam plus peccata ipsa displicent quam ulla corporis poena, non reflectunt ad peccandum, sed ab omni labe penitus purgant. pax enim perfecta etiam corporis suo tempore roborabitur, si nunc pacem quam dominus per fidem dare dignatus est, inconcusse spiritus noster atque incommutabiliter teneat*' (translation: Frederiksen, *Augustine on Romans*, 65).

[217] *exp. Gal.* 64.

lead the new Paul to eternal life, and thus to glorify himself through Paul.[218] How then did these persecutions foster the mortification of Paul's old nature and the furthering of his identity in Christ? As Augustine indicates in several passages, before his conversion Paul was a carnal Jew who obeyed the law out of a desire for temporal reward. He persecuted Jewish Christians, transgressors of the Mosaic Law, to prove his own faithfulness to the law and to receive a place of honour among his people.[219] As a Christian apostle, it is precisely these earthly rewards that are denied to him. Rather than being honoured by the world through the preaching of Christ and the making of disciples, he is rejected and persecuted, just like his master. In this way God disciplined Paul to love Christ for his own sake, and to dedicate himself to the Church for Christ's sake, rather than for any temporal reward.[220]

This does not mean, however, that Christ sustains his people merely with spiritual delights. On the contrary, it is to those who first seek the kingdom of God, that everything else will be given. Christ provides his people with all the temporal necessities that they need to seek the kingdom of God. Just like the Jews in the Old Testament, Christians receive temporal sustenance in order to serve God, and rewards for serving Him.[221] Paul also received honour from the people for whom he did his work as an apostle.[222] However, because God's children are still inclined to shift their trust from God to the God's gifts, he regularly withholds these rewards, in order to exercise their love for him and to purify it from stains. As Augustine puts it in *De sermone domini in monte*:

> When this apostle mentions his tribulations and labors . . . let us not think that God has wavered in His promises, when the apostle suffered hunger and thirst and nakedness while seeking the kingdom of God and His justice . . . That Physician to whom we have entirely entrusted ourselves and from whom we have the promise of the present life and of the life to come—that Physician intends to help us through these things. He places them before us or takes them away according as He judges it expedient for us, for He governs us and guides us so that we may be consoled and exercised in this life, and so that in the life to come we may be established and confirmed in eternal rest.[223]

[218] Augustine refers to Acts 9:6: 'I will show him how much suffering he must undergo for my name's sake.'

[219] *exp. Gal.* 62. [220] *exp. Gal.* 5. [221] *s. dom. m.* 2,57–8; *c. Adim.* 12.

[222] *exp. Gal.* 5.

[223] *s. dom. mon.* 2,58, CCL 35,154: '*In commemoratione autem tribulationum ac laborum suorum idem apostolus . . . non aestimemus domini promissa titubasse, ut famem ac sitim et nuditatem pateretur apostolus quaerens regnum et iustitiam dei . . . quando quidem ista sicut adiutoria nouit ille medicus, cui semel nos totos commisimus, et a quo habemus promissionem uitae praesentis et futurae, quando adponat quando detrahat, sicut nobis iudicat expedire; quos et consolandos et exercendos in hac uita et post hanc uitam in perpetua requie stabiliendos atque firmandos gubernat et dirigit*.'

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH: SERVING GOD'S PEDAGOGY

Correctio fraterna

In the second chapter of this book we investigated the practice of dialectics at the 'school' of Cassiciacum.[224] This practice could be regarded as a form of mutual correction, aimed to bring each other to a deeper understanding of the truth. Augustine believed that the truth itself made use of this dialectic process to draw its lovers upwards to itself. We observed, however, that underneath the love of truth lingered a desire for praise and domination. Serving the truth through mutual correction proved to be a difficult task for Augustine's pupils. After his ordination as a priest, Augustine's reflections on brotherly correction recur in the context of his congregational and monastic responsibilities and his engagement with biblical texts. As he did in Cassiciacum, in his treatment of brotherly correction Augustine repeatedly warns of the danger of abusing the truth for selfish purposes. When sinful humans judge each other, the abuse of justice always looms.

Augustine develops his view of brotherly correction by embedding it deeper in a Christological framework. Christians should regard each other as one in Christ, and imitate Christ in their mutual love for each other. This means that love and patience with the brother should rule the exercise of judgement. Just as God put his justice in the service of his love in that Christ bore the sins of others, Christians should patiently bear the sins and infirmities of their brothers, in order to foster their healing.[225] Just as Jesus came into the world not to judge, but to give his life for sinners, Christians refrain from passing final judgement upon their brothers, but regard their vices as their own and see it as their responsibility to facilitate the process of healing.[226] If they find it difficult to love the brother, because the brother's vices obscure his good qualities, they must quell their frustration and consider that Christ has died on the brother's behalf. It is not the love of the brother's good character that drives the Christian's patience with his infirmities, but rather the love of Christ

[224] Thus far this theme has received little attention in Augustinian scholarship, as is observed by Jennifer Ebbeler in her recent book on Augustine's disciplinary activity in his letters: Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians*, 42. Agostino Clerici, *La correzione fraterna in S. Agostino* (Palermo: Edizioni Augustini, 1989) gives a concise overview of this theme in Augustine's works. Further, Van Bavel wrote the entry 'Correction' in *Augustine Through the Ages*, 242–4 and 'Correptio', in *A-L*. More particular attention as been paid to the theme in Augustine's monastic rule by L. Verheijen. The only dissertations that exist on this topic are G. Keating, *The Moral Problems of Fraternal, Paternal and Judicial Correction. According to Saint Augustine* (Unpublished Dissertation, Gregoriana; Rome, 1958) and Daniel Edward Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

[225] *diu. qu.* 71,3. Augustine refers to Phil. 2:5–8.

[226] *diu. qu.* 71,4.

who has died for the brother and promised to be the physician of sinners.[227] Augustine writes:

> This then, is the law of Christ, that we should bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). For by loving Christ we easily endure another's weakness, even if we do not yet love him because of his own good qualities. For we realize that the Lord whom we love died for him. The apostle Paul brought this love to our attention when he said: 'And the weak brother will perish while you know it, a brother for whom Christ died' (1 Cor. 8:11). [Paul said this] so that if we love the weak brother less because of the fault that made him weak, we should see him in him (*illum in eo consideremus*) who died for him. Not to love Christ, however, is not weakness but death. Hence, we should be aware, with great care and having implored God's mercy, that we do not neglect Christ because of the weak brother, when we should love him because of Christ.[228]

Moreover, Augustine adds, a Christian should bear in mind that he is as liable to sin as the brother who tries one's patience. Hence, not only the love of Christ, but also the knowledge of a common weakness should motivate care for and patience with the other.[229] With this approach to brotherly love as the context of mutual correction, Augustine decisively departs from the classical ideal of '*Zweckfreundschaft*', which bases love between friends upon mutual respect for each other's moral capacities.[230]

These considerations on Christian love and humility lead Augustine to emphasize that all mutual correction should be preceded by self-scrutiny. Christians must correct each other (Gal. 6:1), but before they do so, they must consider whether they intend this in a spirit of gentleness, motivated by love for the sinner, rather than by the lust for vengeance or the desire to dominate. Augustine is well aware that if sinful humans exercise justice (in whatever form), they are inclined to misuse it in the service of self-interest.

[227] *diu. qu.* 71,6.

[228] *diu. qu.* 71,7, CCL 44A,207: '*Ipsa est ergo lex Christi, ut inuicem onera nostra portemus. Christum autem diligendo facile sustinemus infirmitatem alterius, etiam quem nondum propter sua bona diligimus. Cogitamus enim quia ille quem diligimus dominus propter eum mortuus est. quam caritatem nobis apostolus Paulus ingessit cum diceret: et peribit infirmus in tua scientia, frater propter quem Christus mortuus est [1 Cor. 8,11], ut si illum infirmum propter uitium quo infirmus est minus diligimus, illum in eo consideremus, qui mortuus est propter ipsum. Christum autem non diligere non infirmitas sed mors est. quapropter ingenti cura et implorata dei misericordia cogitandum est, ne Christum neglegamus propter infirmum, cum infirmum debeamus diligere propter Christum.*'

[229] *exp. Gal.* 57. With reference to Gal. 6:2.

[230] The literature on Augustine's view on friendship is vast. I derive my observations from David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 75.159–60; idem, 'Problems in the History of Christian Friendship', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4/1 (1996), 87–113 (101). Cf. also I. Hadot, 'Amicita', *A-L* vol. 1, 291–2. That Augustine's understanding of friendship was influenced by classical concepts of friendship goes without saying. One example is his Ciceronian definition of friendship as an 'agreement in all things human and divine'.

'We should never undertake the task of rebuking another's sin without first examining our own conscience by inner questioning and then responding—unequivocally with God—that we are acting out of love.'[231] If one is obsessed with a desire for vengeance (e.g. because his feelings are hurt), one does not have a mind that is healthy enough to heal the mind of the other person. Just like a doctor needs clean hands to treat his patient, the Christian needs a clean mind to treat the patient under his hands. If he discovers that his mind is troubled by affections of anger or vengeance, these should first be washed away through repentance. Until that moment one should refrain from rebuking the brother,[232] and rather invite him to common repentance.[233] In this way, one simultaneously promotes the correction of the neighbour, but avoids hypocrisy about one's own moral status.[234] The anger about the sin of the brother (which can in itself be justifiable) easily becomes a means to avenge oneself, or to cover up one's own unrighteousness. Obsession with the straw in the eye of the brother easily blinds one to the beam in one's own eye (Matt. 7:4).[235]

Augustine applies these insights into the psychology of fraternal correction to the attitude of the Donatists towards the Catholic Church in Hippo. According to Augustine, the Donatists had isolated the sin of *traditio* to the community of the Catholics, and thus used the alleged unrighteousness of the Catholic community to boast in their own justice. Their righteousness seemed to consist in not belonging to the impure community of the Caecilianists. Augustine contends that this obsession with the sins of others had blinded the Donatists to their own iniquities. Their community also hid *traditores*. But in order to uphold their own innocence, Augustine argues, they 'wanted to transfer the sin that they themselves committed to others'.[236] In Augustine's

[231] *exp. Gal.* 57, CSEL 84,133: '*Numquam itaque alieni peccati obiurgandi suscipiendum est negotium, nisi cum internis interrogationibus examinantes nostram conscientiam liquido nobis coram deo responderimus dilectione nos facere*' (translation: Plumer, 225).

[232] *exp. Gal.* 57.

[233] *s. dom. m.* 2,64, CCL 35,161: '*Si autem cogitantes nosmet ipsos inuenerimus in eo esse uitio in quo est ille quem reprehendere parabamus, non reprehendamus neque obiurgemus, sed tamen congemiscamus; et non illum ad obtemperandum nobis sed ad pariter conandum inuitemus.*'

[234] Keating, *The Moral Problems of Fraternal, Paternal and Judicial Correction*, 43. Augustine also warns against too rash a judgement on someone's behaviour. Some acts are unambiguously wrong, but the moral status of other actions is dependent upon the intention of the actor. Until we know this intention, we should not pass judgement on such actions (*s. dom. m.* 1,61).

[235] *s. dom. m.* 1,63. On Augustine's exegesis of Matt. 7:4 see L. Verheijen, 'The Straw, the Beam, the Tusculan Disputations and the Rule of St. Augustine: On a Surprising Augustinian Exegesis', *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971), 17–36. Augustine identifies the beam (*trabes*) with *ira inueterata*, anger that has grown old. Augustine's understanding of the danger of anger is comparable to that of Cicero. Anger obfuscates the mind and impedes it to service justice in the correction of the other person. A spirit of vindictiveness hinders one from acting with patience towards the other and helping him convert from his vices. Cf. *De officiis* 1,33; 88–9 (Loeb, 35–7; 89–91).

[236] *Ps. c. Don.* 21–4, ed. Anastasi 46: '*Homines multum superbi, qui se iustos dicunt esse… Diabolo se tradiderunt, cum pugnant de traditione et crimen quod commiserunt in alios uolunt*

view, the Donatist schism was an act of judgement that functioned in the service of self-justification. The Donatists did not put themselves under the demands of justice, which would have led them to confession and reconciliation with their brothers in the name of Christ, but they used the law to condemn their brothers and to hide their own sins. Rather than serving unity, their anger enacted separation.

The fact that the judgement of sin can be abused does not lead Augustine to refrain from judgement altogether. The condemnation of sin belongs to a genuine expression of brotherly love. Christians should let themselves be used as instruments of the divine discipline, in which God puts his penal justice in the service of his children's sanctification. And exactly because of the transformative purpose of discipline the Christian should always reflect upon how to correct his brother in such a way that it fosters his improvement. His rebuke should not just be retributive, but pedagogical. First of all, this requires a willingness to explain why the brother's behaviour is wrong, and a readiness to suffer his anger without becoming angry oneself (2 Tim. 2:23–4).[237] This does not mean that all rebuke should be done in a gentle manner. What kind of treatment is applied to the person in question depends on what seems most effective for his ultimate healing:[238] 'Whether to use more severity or more charm in speaking should be determined by what seems necessary for the salvation of the person being corrected.'[239]

Neither does attentiveness to the brother's situation always imply that one should wait until the brother seems receptive for reproach. Paul advises his pupil Timothy to rebuke in season or out of season (2 Tim. 4:2). Rebuking one's brother against his will, when he seems completely unreceptive, can still be a loving act. Augustine compares this way of correction with the practice of doctors who tie a patient down against his will, while he screams that he would rather die than be treated in this way. The doctor, however, continues patiently, and focuses on the necessary surgery, because he knows that this is what the patient needs. Likewise, Christians should sometimes choose to apply surgery on a brother against his will and suffer his anger, because they are convinced that the brother's situation requires this kind of remedy. God often

transferre.' Augustine makes this point even clearer in *c. ep. Parm.* 3,5. In that passage he compares the Donatists to the Pharisee who boasted in his own righteousness over against the tax collector, instead of confessing the sins that he shared with his brother (Luke 18:14).

[237] *exp. Gal.* 56. God also uses the angry response of the brother to test one's love for Christ and brother. God not only exercises his discipline through the righteous will of the one who rebukes, but also through the unrighteous response of the one who is rebuked. This is why Christ congratulates those who are persecuted for the sake of his name (*s. dom. m.* 1,13).

[238] Keating, *Fraternal, Paternal and Judicial Correction*, 20–1.

[239] *exp. Gal.* 56, CSEL 84,131: '*Pax igitur et dilectio communis periculi cogitatione in corde seruentur, modus autem sermonis siue acrius siue blandius proferatur sicut salus eius, quem corrigis, uidetur postulare, moderandus est*' (translation: Plumer, 223).

uses such fierce and apparently unfruitful surgery to heal the person in question. Augustine writes: 'For many, reflecting afterwards on what they were told and how they deserved it, have in fact criticized themselves even more sternly and severely, and though they appeared to go away from the "physician" quite upset, they were gradually healed as the force of the word penetrated in their hearts. This would not happen if we always waited for the patient with gangrene to ask for treatment, when cautery or surgery would save him.'[240] Augustine summarizes his exposition of brotherly correction with the words: 'Love, and say what you like: in no way will what sounds like a curse (*maledictum*) really be an insult if you keep clearly in mind that your intention in using the sword of God's word is to liberate the person from the siege of vices.'[241] This injunction would return in the context of the Donatist controversy and would form the ethical directive that Augustine gave to state officials who persecuted the Donatists.[242] Also the metaphor of the doctor who ties his patients down against their will, in order to foster their healing, will return later in Augustine's justification of state penalties against the Donatists.[243]

The Practice of Discipline in Augustine's Religious Community

A more specific context in which Augustine addressed the topic of brotherly correction is in the rule that he composed for his religious community. Although there is still discussion concerning the date of the rule's composition, most scholars hold the view that Augustine wrote it around 397, shortly after his ordination as a bishop and the establishment of a monastery for clerics in the episcopal house of Hippo.[244] As has been observed in Chapters 2 and 3, from the

[240] *exp. Gal.* 56, CSEL 84,132: '*Multi enim postea cogitantes, quae audierint et quam iuste audierint, ipsi se grauius et seuerius arguerunt et, quamuis perturbatiores a medico uiderentur abscedere, paulatim uerbi uigore in medullas penetrante sanati sunt. Quod non fieret, si semper expectaremus periclitantem putrescentibus membris, quando eum liberet aut uri aut secari*' (translation: Plumer, 225).

[241] *exp. Gal.* 57, CSEL 84,134: '*Dilige et dic quod uoles. Nullo modo maledictum erit, quod specie maledicti sonuerit, si memineris senserisque te in gladio uerbi dei liberatorem hominis esse uelle ab obsidione uitiorum.*' From the perspective of the one rebuked, Augustine emphasizes that one should not pay attention to the harshness of the rebuke, but to the truth thereby uttered. For in the truth of another's rebuke, however harsh, Christ, the Truth itself, is addressing us. Cf. *ep.* 33,3.

[242] *ep. Io. tr.* 7,8, PL 35,2033: '*Semel ergo breue praeceptum tibi praecipitur, dilige, et quod uis fac: siue taceas, dilectione taceas; siue clames, dilectione clames; siue emendes, dilectione emendes; siue parcas, dilectione parcas: radix sit intus dilectionis, non potest de ista radice nisi bonum existere.*' Cf. Jacques Gallay, 'Dilige et quod uis fac', *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955), 545–55; M.-F. Berrouard, 'Dilige et quod uis fac', *A-L* vol. 2, 454–5.

[243] *ep.* 89,6; *ep.* 93,2–4; *ep.* 185,7.

[244] For an overview of the discussions on authorship and date of the *Praeceptum*, see Luc Verheijen, *La Règle de saint Augustin, vol. 1: Recherches historiques* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1967), 87–116; idem, *Nouvelle Approche de la règle de saint Augustin* (Bégrolles

moment of his conversion Augustine had lived the Christian life as a member of a community of friends who had devoted themselves to a life of mutual help on the way to God. This communal life became increasingly embedded within the life of the Church and lost its initial philosophical outlook.[245]

This section illustrates Augustine's understanding of discipline as he expounds it in his monastic rule. I will first illustrate the general disciplinary function of the rule for the community and then describe the disciplinary procedure that it prescribes in the case of a particular brother who commits a sin and refuses to repent. Finally, we will look to the role of the community's superior (*praepositus*).

Communal correction

The purpose of communal life according to Augustine's rule is 'to live harmoniously in the house (Ps. 67:7) and to have one heart and one soul seeking God (Acts 4:23a)'.[246] With these words Augustine in fact declares the double commandment of love, the love of God, and the neighbour in God, as the core of the monastic life. As such, Augustine's religious community merely tries to live out what should characterize all Christians.[247] In order to express and exercise this love, the monks engage in a life of continence (*continentia*) by giving up private possessions, social status, and marriage. Furthermore, they promise to support each other in leading this life of continence. The prescriptions of the rule are intended to help the community to remain focused on their common purpose. The superior (*praepositus*) is there to supervise the monks' common obedience to the rule.

Augustine depicts the monks as living *sub gratia*, but simultaneously as struggling with sinful desires. On the one hand, the monks are said to have been called to live as free people *sub gratia*, as lovers of spiritual beauty, spreading the good odour of Christ by their way of life.[248] On the other

en Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1980), 58–73; George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 127–35 (on Augustine's authorship), 148–52 (overview of scholarship on the date of composition).

[245] Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement', 329–40; G. P. Lawless, 'Augustine's First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo?', *Miscellanea di Studi Agostiniani in onore di p. Agostino Trapè*, Rome, 1985 (= *Augustinianum* 25, 1985), 65–78. Augustine's concept of community changed from a more Neoplatonic kind of '*Zweckfreundschaft*', in which intellectual capacities form the basis of friendship, to a more Christian concept of community, based on unity in Christ (I. Hadot, 'Amicita', *A-L* vol. 1, 291–2).

[246] *reg.* 1,2.

[247] W. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church', *Augustinian Studies* 8 (1977), 96–7.

[248] *reg.* 8,1, ed. Verheijen, 437: '*Donet dominus, ut obseruetis haec omnia cum dilectione, tamquam spiritalis pulchritudinis amatores et bono Christi odore de bona conuersatione flagrantes, non sicut serui sub lege, sed sicut liberi sub gratia constituti.*'

hand, their desire for personal honour, private possession, and carnal pleasure (*suae quaerere* rather than *quaerere quae Iesu Christi sunt*)[249] continues to tempt them and they regularly capitulate to it. This is why they continuously stand in need of correction. They receive this correction primarily through the weekly reading of the precepts of the rule. Upon hearing these precepts one is either confirmed in one's obedience to God, or confronted with one's disobedience and thus called to repentance and confession of sins. Augustine writes:

> This little book is to be read to you once a week. As in a mirror, you will be able to see in it whether there is anything you are neglecting or forgetting (cf. Jam. 1:23–5). If you find that your actions match what is written here, thank the Lord who is the giver of every good (Jam. 1:17). If, however, a person sees that he has failed in some way, then let him be sorry for what has occurred in the past and be on his guard for what the future will bring. Let him pray that his sin be forgiven and that he not be led into temptation (Mt. 6:12–13).[250]

Besides helping the monk to recognize the fruits of grace, the reading of the rule confronts him with his shortcomings, and helps him to confess his sins before God, to ask for forgiveness and for future help from God.

The disciplinary process in case of individual sins

Chapter 4 of the rule addresses the personal application of this public form of correction. In this chapter Augustine describes the disciplinary procedure that should be followed if one witnesses a brother committing a sin. He uses the example of lustful glancing at women.

Before discussing the details of this social-juridical process, Augustine emphasizes that discipline by the community is much more than an interpersonal affair. It serves God's own discipline in the lives of the monks. His judgement of sin is mediated through the discipline of the community. One should not avoid sin because one fears rejection from the community, but rather because one fears God, even if one's glancing escapes the notice of the brother. Augustine writes: 'The holy man should fear to displease God, lest he desire to please a woman sinfully. Let him bear in mind (*illum cogitet*) that

[249] *reg.* 5,2 (1 Cor. 13:5).

[250] *reg.* 8,2, ed. Verheijen, 437: '*Ut autem uos in hoc libello tamquam in speculo possitis inspicere, ne per obliuionem aliquid neglegatis, semel in septimana uobis legatur. Et ubi uos inueneritis ea quae scripta sunt facientes, agite gratias domino bonorum omnium largitori. Ubi autem sibi quicumque uestrum uidet aliquid deesse, doleat de praeterito, caueat de futuro, orans ut ei debitum dimittatur et in temptationem non inducatur*' (slightly adapted translation taken from T. J. van Bavel and Raymond Canning, *The Rule of St. Augustine* (New York: Image Books, 1986), 38).

God sees everything, so that he will not glance at a woman in an evil way.'[251] It is the fear of God that should motivate the monk to control himself. Monastic discipline aims to foster this fear of God, rather than of fellow humans.

Having clarified the transcendental dimension of discipline, Augustine continues to discuss the first phase of the disciplinary process: mutual correction. He argues that God uses mutual vigilance to preserve the purity of his children: 'Mutually safeguard your purity, when you are together in church and wherever women are present. God, who dwells in you, will protect you in this way too by your mutual vigilance.'[252] If one of the brothers observes another brother looking at a woman in a forbidden way, he is called to reprove the culprit immediately (*statim admonete*), so that the sin might not progress (*ne coepta progediatur*) and might as soon as possible be corrected (*sed de proximo corrigatur*).[253] If one observes the same person, after the admonition, doing the same thing again, one should report him (*indicare*) to the *praepositus* as a 'wounded person in need of healing' (*uulneratum sanandum*).

Augustine is very well aware that the monks are reluctant to do this, either from fear of being discovered by the offender, or from the desire not to be disloyal to the brother. He argues, however, that it would be cruel to remain silent about the infection of a brother's heart, just as it would be cruel to ignore a corporeal wound, which the patient prefers to conceal out of fear for surgery. To denounce the illness of the brother to the *praepositus* should be seen as merciful, for only by revealing the offence does one create the opportunity for the brother to be helped by others (*indicando corrigere potestis fratres uestros*), even if this happens against his will.[254] Furthermore, the fact that one has to report the brother to the *praepositus* rather than continue to rebuke him personally should probably be explained both from the danger of false accusation, and because of the power of a higher authority. The authority of the *praepositus* could convince the accused to confess his sin, but also safeguarded the impartiality of the process. The *praepositus* had the authority to start a judicial process.

The *praepositus* confronts the sinner with the accusation in private (*secretius corripere*). Only if the brother continues to deny the accusation 'are others to be summoned without his knowledge so that he can be accused in the presence of all, not by a single witness but by two or three'.[255] Here, Augustine

[251] *reg.* 4,5, ed. Verheijen, 425: '*Illi ergo uir sanctus timeat displicere, ne uelit feminae male placere. Illum cogitet omnia uidere, ne uelit feminam male uidere. Illius namque et in hac causa conmendatus est timor, ubi scriptum est: abominatio est domino defigens oculum [Prv. 27,20 LXX].*'

[252] *reg.* 4,6, ed. Verheijen, 426: '*Quando ergo simul estis in ecclesia et ubicumque ubi et feminae sunt, inuicem uestram pudicitiam custodite; Deus enim qui habitat in uobis, etiam isto modo uos custodiet ex uobis.*'

[253] *reg.* 4,7.

[254] *reg.* 5,8.

[255] *reg.* 5,9, ed. Verheijen, 426: '*Tunc nescienti adhibendi sunt alii, ut iam coram omnibus possit, non ab uno teste argui, sed a duobus uel tribus conuinci.*'

is using an element from the Matthean account of church discipline (Matt. 18:15–17). Ghislain Lafont has argued that Augustine turns the 'two or three others' into witnesses in a public trial, whereas in Matthew they function as private correctors.[256] However, the Matthean account also seems to emphasize the judicial function of these other brothers, as it refers to Deut. 19:15, which deals with the legal grounds for the credibility of an accusation: at least two or three witnesses are needed for a charge to be valid (*in ore duorum uel trium testium stabit omnem uerbum*[257]). The reason why one should take two or three other brothers along after the sinner has refused to listen (*si autem non te audierit adhibe tecum adhuc unum vel duos*) is to collect legal grounds for a public accusation. Augustine thus interpreted Matt. 18:16 from this judicial perspective.[258] Only if two or three witnesses testify to the accusation can the delinquent be publicly convicted (*conuinci*) and punished (*coherceri*). This procedure sounds severe, but intends to preserve the impartiality of the process.

If the accused is convicted, he must submit to a punishment (*uindicta*) that is determined by either the *praepositus* or the priest.[259] Just like the verbal *correptiones*, this punishment aims to heal the sinner (*emendatoria*). It is not primarily vindictive, but therapeutic.[260] Augustine does not explicate what kind of punishments he has in mind. He might have thought of public penance. Through public penance the Christian disciplines himself in a righteousness that he had lost and actively restores the relationship with God and the community.[261] In the *ordo monasterii* 10, however, Augustine also speaks of corporeal punishment when it concerns younger people, such as children.[262]

[256] Ghislain Lafont, 'Fraternal Correction in the Augustinian Community: A Confrontation between the Praeceptum, IV, 6–9 and Matthew 18:15–17', in *Word and Spirit* 10 (1988), 87–91.

[257] This text is echoed in *reg.* 4,8, ed. Verheijen, 426: '*Prius tamen et alteri uel tertio demonstratum, ut duorum uel trium possit ore conuinci et conpetenti seueritate coherceri.*'

[258] For the function of Matt. 18:15–17 in the rule, see Verheijen, *Nouvelle Approche*, 324; Van Bavel, *The Rule of St. Augustine*, 78. Another text that might have inspired Augustine in this regard is 1 Tim. 5:19–20 ('Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear'—translation: ESV). Van Bavel remarks that Augustine basically follows the Matthean procedure, but adds the step of the *correptio secreta* by the *praepositus* between the fraternal correction and the public accusation.

[259] *reg.* 4,9, ed. Verheijen, 427: '*Conuictus uero, secundum praepositi, uel etiam presbyteri ad cuius dispensationem pertinent, arbitrium, debet emendatoriam sustinere uindictam.*' For a broader discussion on the relationship between *praepositus* and *presbyter*, see Verheijen, *Nouvelle Approche*, 394–401.

[260] On the term *uindicta/poena emendatoria*, see Verheijen, *Nouvelle Approche*, 315–21.

[261] H. B. Weijland, *Augustinus en de kerkelijke tucht* (Kampen: Kok, 1965), 150–1. In works composed before his ordination as a bishop, Augustine does not address the practice of penance. *Diu. qu.* 26 indicates, however, that Augustine already knew of the difference between public penance for great offences and penance for daily sins.

[262] Julia Hillner, 'Monks and Children: Corporeal Punishment in Late Antiquity', *European Review of History* 16/6 (2009), 773–91 (781).

If the convicted brother refuses to submit to the punishment, he is to be expelled (*proicitur*) from the community. Also this exclusion from the community is to be regarded as an act of mercy towards the sinner. First, exclusion prevents him from increasing his guilt by making more brothers perish (*plurimos perdat*) through the deadly contagion (*pestifera contagio*) of his life.[263] Second, it confronts the sinner with an already-existing reality, which had remained hidden until now: his alienation from the inner life of the community. If the community allowed the sinner to exercise his membership without impediments, this would help him feel invulnerable to divine judgement, despite his way of life. By excommunicating him, the community opposes this self-deception, in order to instil in the sinner the fear of God, and to foster his conversion and return. This recalls the way in which Augustine describes Adam's exclusion from paradise in *De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos* 2,34.[264] The mortality to which the first humans became subject was nothing more than God's affirmation of Adam's inward alienation from God.[265] It was a *dimittere*, a 'letting go', in order to persuade Adam of the self-deception of sin, so that he eventually might turn back to the tree of life.

The exclusion of the sinner also protects the health (*sanitas*) of the community against the brother's infectious illness. Exclusion is a public disapproval of the sinner's persistence in sin and thus affirms the religious identity of the community.

The role of the praepositus

As we have observed already, the *praepositus* receives great authority. He represents God himself and therefore deserves due respect from the brothers. He has the task of ensuring that the precepts of the rule are observed, and that infractions are corrected (*emendandum corrigendumque*). Matters that exceed his competence and power, however, are to be referred to the priest, who has greater authority over the community.[266] Augustine is well aware, however, that the *praepositus* himself is also a sinner, just like those over whom he presides. Augustine even says that the higher one's position is, the more

[263] *reg.* 5,9, ed. Verheijen, 426: '*Non enim et hoc fit crudeliter, sed misericorditer, ne contagione pestifera plurimos perdat*.' Obviously, Augustine understands the contagiousness of the sinner in a *moral* sense, rather than in a ritual sense, as did the Donatists.

[264] *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,34.

[265] Verheijen, *Nouvelle Approche*, 345. Verheijen also points to *reg.* 6,2 where Augustine writes that someone who refuses to ask forgiveness is 'entirely out of place in the monastery, even if he is not excluded' (*sine causa est in monasterio, etiam si inde non proiciatur*).

[266] *reg.* 7,3, ed. Verheijen, 435: '*. . . ad presbyterum, cuius est apud uos maior auctoritas, referat, quod modum uel uires eius excedit*.' According to Verheijen this could have to do with knowledge of doctrine in which the presbyter was better versed than the *praepositus*. See Verheijen, *Nouvelle Approche*, 394–6.

dangerous it becomes.[267] The primal moral danger for the *praepositus* is the abuse of power for personal gain. Therefore, he is urged to see himself as one who does not dominate through power (*potestate dominantem*), but serves through love (*caritate seruientem*). This does not mean that he refrains from using his power to correct and even punish, but that he does so with the intention to instil the fear of God in those who he has under his authority, and to foster their obedience to God's commandments. He should know that his position of honour is only an instrument to help others fear God. He should always bear in mind that he himself has to give an account of his ministry to God (*semper cogitans deo se pro uobis redditurum esse rationem*). This awareness should help him to serve in love, even when he exercises discipline, rather than to take the place of God by dominating others.[268] The use of power (*potestas*) is to be led by the love of justice and the love of the neighbour.

Church Discipline and Civil Authorities

A third question that is to be addressed in our discussion of church discipline concerns the involvement of civil authorities in this process. During the Donatist controversy Augustine came to justify state intervention as a means of church discipline. Witnessing the return of many Donatist families, he came to believe that the state laws promulgated by Honorius inspired them with a useful fear of temporal punishment that evolved into a genuine fear of God, which eventually led them to reconciliation with the Catholic Church.

In Chapter 3 we concluded that Augustine's early theology does not offer grounds to think that he would have rejected this idea earlier in his career because of any principal discontinuity between the Old and the New Testament. We concluded that the Christian religion is not inherently less violent, or more rational, than its Old Testament foreshadowing. The difference between the two dispensations is one of shadow and reality: the temporal punishments and rewards of the Old Testament foreshadow the eternal punishments and rewards of the New Testament, which Christ will distribute when he comes in judgement. This difference explains why the Church itself

[267] *reg.* 7,4, ed. Verheijen, 436: '*Quia inter uos, quanto in loco superiore, tanto in periculo maiore uersatur*.'

[268] *reg.* 7,3, ed. Verheijen, 436: '*Ipse uero qui uobis praeest, non se existimet potestate dominantem, sed caritate seruientem felicem. honore coram uobis praelatus sit uobis, timore coram deo substratus sit pedibus uestris. Circa omnes seipsum bonorum operum praebeat exemplum, corripiat inquietos, consoletur pusillianimes, suscipiat infirmos, patiens sit ad omnes. disciplinam libens habeat, metum inponat. Et quamuis utrumque sit necessarium, tamen plus a uobis amari adpetat quam timeri, semper cogitans deo se pro uobis redditurum esse rationem*.' Biblical texts that influenced Augustine's understanding of the office of *praepositus* are Heb. 13:17; Gal. 5:13; Tit. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:14.

does not dispose of civil means to impose the commandments of God. However, this does not mean that the Church, in the time between its political existence in Israel and the second coming of Christ, cannot arrive in a situation in which the kings of the earth become members of the Church and somehow subject their political authority to the Church's mission. Augustine's reflections on this theme in his works before the high point of the Donatist controversy are rather scarce, however. Nonetheless, in the 390s he developed some ideas which proved to be foundational for the argument he would develop from around 400 in favour of the coercive measures issued against the Donatists.

The first issue concerns the question of whether corporeal punishment can be inflicted by Christians. The Manichaean missionary Adimantus had confronted Augustine with this question in his book *Antithesis*. Augustine responds to this treatise in his 394 work *Contra Adimantum.* Adimantus had argued that the God of the Old Testament and Jesus are opposed to each other, as the God of the Old Testament endowed his office bearers with the task to execute judgement upon God's enemies, whereas Jesus commanded his apostles to love their enemies unto death. In other words, the New Testament leaves no place for retributive punishment, inflicted by humans in the name of God. Augustine opposes this idea in *De sermone Domini in monte* 1,63 and *Contra Adimantum* 17. In short, Augustine's response to the Manichees is that retributive punishment can stand in the service of righteousness and love for the neighbour. Therefore, it is perfectly reconcilable with Christ's commandment to love God and one's enemy. The interest that underlies Augustine's argument is that if the Manichaean position were true, any retributive act inflicted by humans would be evil. This would lead to a revolutionary rejection of all civil authority. Over against the Manichaean way of thinking, Augustine wants to uphold the idea that retributive justice can be reconciled with the commandments of Christ.

Augustine supports his proposition by referring to the example of the apostles as the successors of the Old Testament prophets. Before Pentecost they were still unable to inflict punishments, as they had not yet received the Spirit of love. At Pentecost, however, the Spirit descended upon them and enabled them to exercise authority with love. From that time on God gave the apostles the authority to inflict punishment, sometimes even corporeal in nature. Augustine gives the example of Peter through whom God put Ananias and Sapphira to death, because they had lied against the Holy Spirit. He also points to Paul who commands the Corinthians to hand the brother who lives with his mother over to Satan 'unto the destruction of his flesh', in order that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:3–5).[269]

[269] Augustine admits to his Manichaean opponents that Paul's expression 'destruction of the flesh' might not refer to corporeal death, but to repentance. Nonetheless, they have to admit that Paul inflicted a certain kind of punishment on this sinner by handing him over to Satan. See *s. dom. m.* 1,65; *c. Adim.* 17,2.

Augustine derives his strongest argument, however, from the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, which were held in high esteem among his Manichaean opponents. The acts relate that the apostle Thomas was struck by a cupbearer while he attended a feast of the king of India. In response, Thomas cursed the cupbearer, but at the same time prayed for his ultimate salvation. When the cupbearer went to the well to draw water, he was devoured by a lion. Dogs brought one of his hands into the room were Thomas was dining, and all the people were filled with great fear of the apostle and paid him honour. From this moment on he began to teach the gospel.[270]

These examples show, according to Augustine, that all of these apostles where authorized by God to inflict punishments for the sins of those over whom God had given them authority. And they did so out of love, as they inflicted temporal punishment in order to pursue their subject's eternal salvation. Moreover, to those who witnessed these punishments, they functioned as a call to conversion, so that they would 'not be condemned with the world' (1 Cor. 11:32). By saying this, Augustine does not deny that Old and New Testament differ with regard to the way in which the Church is ruled. Bishops, the present rulers of the Church, are not endowed with the same authority to punish as was, for example, Moses, in whom spiritual and civil authority were united. Bishops can rebuke people, and have the authority to impose penances, to depose clerics from their charges, and ultimately to excommunicate persistent sinners, but of themselves they do not have the means to impose such measures with violence, unless this power is given to them by the state.[271]

What Augustine's argument does achieve, however, is that it makes room for the infliction of corporeal punishment by Christians in the service of the Church. The only thing is that one needs to possess the authority (*potestas*) that is required to inflict such punishments. Augustine states that in the present time the authority over our life in the body has been given to the powers of this age (*potestates huius mundi*).[272] At first hearing, this phrase has a negative connotation in Augustine's throught. The phrase *potestates huius*

[270] *s. dom. m.* 1,65; *c. Adim.* 17,2. See *The Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas* 6–9 (ANF 8,536–7).

[271] Dixon, *Many Layers*, vol. 2, 377. In the late Roman Empire, after the conversion of Constantine, bishops increasingly received civil responsibilies and rights, especially as judge, but these responsibilities did not originate from their office as such. See Daniel Edward Doyle, 'Augustin als Bischof: Visitator und Richter', in *Augustin Handbuch*, edited by Volker Henning Drecoll (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 222–4. On Augustine's responsibilities as judge, see further Kauko K. Raikas, 'Audientia episcopalis. Problematik zwischen Staat und Kirche bei Augustin', *Augustinianum* 37 (1997), 459–81; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[272] *exp. prop. Rm.* 72 (on Rom. 13). On Augustine's use of Rom. 13:1–7, see Wilhelm Geerlings, 'Jedermann sei Untertan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat. Augustinus über Röm. 13,1–7', in *Fussnoten zu Augustinus*, 245–66.

mundi primarily refers to the devil and his angels, who exercise the power that they received from God to make humanity subject to them through the fear of death. This subjection of humanity to the fallen angels finds its expression in traditional pagan religion. In their sacrifices to the gods, human beings express their obedience to evil spirits, for the sake of their temporal wellbeing.[273] When Augustine applies the phrase *potestates huius mundi* to human rulers, the reference to the rule of the devil and his angels is still present. Traditionally, the cult of the gods and reverence for the emperor where closely intertwined. The emperor used his power over the temporal lives of his subjects to bind them to himself, challenging the sovereign rule of God by requiring religious allegiance to him. Thus the devil used the temporal power of kings to exercise his rule over humanity.[274] The African Church had suffered from this in her many martyrs, a memory that was kept alive in liturgy and folk piety.[275] The power of emperors (like all human power) thus had an ambiguous connotation in Augustine's mind. God used temporal power to preserve order in the world, but the persons who possessed this power were inclined to use it in the service of God's enemy.

Again this does not imply that Augustine rejected the validity of secular power altogether. All power comes from God. It can be misused, but it can also be sanctified by God's grace. This is what Christians had seen happening in the recent history of the Church in the conversion of Constantine. Augustine inherited this tradition. Through his Ascension, Christ had been annointed as the only rightful king of the earth. In his cross he had triumphed over the principalities and powers of this world.[276] Although the full impact of this

[273] *exp. Gal.* 32 explains the *procuratores actoresque huius mundi* (Gal. 4:8) as the fallen angels who let themselves be served as gods through pagan idol worship. They had held the ancestors of the Galatians subject to themselves through the fear of death. For Augustine's use of *principatus et potestates [huius mundi]* (derived from Col. 2:8 and Eph. 6:2), see further *exp. prop. Rm.* 58; *diu. qu.* 61,2; 67,5. For Augustine's theory on angelic power over temporal creation, see *diu. qu.* 79,1: '*Unaquaeque res uisibilis in hoc mundo habet potestatem angelicam sibi praepositam*.'

[274] In *exp. prop. Rm.* 72 Augustine refers to the history of persecution by pagan emperors as illustrating this.

[275] On the martyr cult in Latin Christianity, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). For Augustine's preaching and thinking on martyrs, see e.g. Carol Straw, 'Martyrdom', *Augustine Through the Ages*, 338–41; J. den Boeft, '"Martyres sunt sed homines fuerunt": Augustine on Martyrdom', in *Fructus Centesimus: mélanges offertes à Gerard J. M. Bartelink à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire*, edited by A. A. R. Bastiaensen, A. Hilhorst, and C. H. Keepkens (Kluwer: Steenbrugge/Dordrecht, 1989), 217–37; T. J. van Bavel, 'The Cult of the Martyrs in St. Augustine: Theology versus Popular Religion?', in *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Festschrift Louis Reekmans*, edited by Peter van Deun and Mathijs Lamberigts (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 251–61; Anthony Dupont, 'Augustine's Homiletic Definition of Martyrdom: The Centrality of the Martyr's Grace in his Anti-Donatist and Anti-Pelagian Sermones ad Populum', in *Martyrdom in Late Antiquity*, edited by Johan Leemans and Peter Gemeinhardt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 145–68.

[276] *diu. qu.* 69,4; *en. Ps.* 9,8.

triumph would only be revealed after his second coming, when every man will confess that all power comes from God,[277] his triumph already creates the possibility that the kings of this world are released from their bondage to the devil and come to acknowledge Christ as the only rightful authority in heaven and on earth.[278] The nations that once persecuted the Church in the name of their idols had converted to Christ.[279] The Church had prayed for the kings of this world and God had heard her prayers. They had turned to Christ, and had placed themselves at service of his Church.[280]

This conversion implied for Augustine that the emperors would now use their power—the power to promulgate laws—to promote the true Christian religion and the cause of the Catholic Church.[281] In his *Psalmus contra Partem Donati* Augustine exemplifies this when he refers to Emperor Constans's sending of money to Africa (347), in order to restore peace between the Donatists and the Catholics. Augustine believed that this history illustrated the present fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies about the kings of the nations offering their gifts to Christ and his people.[282] He moreover affirms that the battle that followed after Donatist resistance to the imperial delegates was a legitimate battle for unity, supported by the laws of the emperor.[283] He condemns the excessive violence used by Macarius and his army, but does not pass any negative judgement on his military intervention as such. These data confirm that according to Augustine, temporal rulers could use their power to legislate and to enforce legislation in the service of the Christian religion and the Catholic Church.[284] He would elaborate on this issue further in early anti-Donatist works such as *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani,* but he seems to espouse his basic ideas already in the early 390s. His reading of Optatus of Milevis' *Contra Parmenianum de Schismate Donatistarum* might have influenced him at this point.[285] Theologically Augustine's position was

[277] *diu. qu.* 69,4.

[278] *diu. qu.* 69,4 where Augustine refers to Christ's present reign in the faithful, through which they 'no longer seek rest in the power of a creature, nor in their own power'.

[279] *en. Ps.* 6,13. Cf. Brown, 'Augustine Attitude', 267; Markus, *Saeculum*, 133. Markus quotes texts that date from the end of the 390s, but the initial idea seems already present in the *Psalmus.*

[280] *Ps. c. Don.* 279–84.

[281] John R. Bowlin, 'Augustine on Justifying Coercion', in *Augustine and Modern Law*, edited by Richard O. Brooks and James Bernard Murphy (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 413–34 (420–1) argues against R. A. Markus that Augustine sees grace as reforming the state unto service to God, rather than making it 'neutral', that is, merely engaged with matters that pertain to this mortal life.

[282] *Ps. c. Don.* 283–4. Cf. Ps. 72:10.

[283] *Ps. c. Don.* 151–4, ed. Anastasi, 858,166: '*Modum si excessit Macharius conscriptum in christiana lege, uel legem regis ferebat cum pugnaret pro unitate.*'

[284] On this interpretation of the *Psalmus*, see Grasmück, *Coercitio*, 170–6.

[285] Chadwick, 'Augustine and State Authority', 56. Optatus and Augustine differ, however, with regard to their evaluation of the death penalty in religious matters. Optatus justified the massacre by Macarius and Paulus with an appeal to Old Testament precedents. Augustine argued that in the New Testament the death penalty had been abolished as a legal punishment

rooted in two arguments: first, in the anti-Manichaean argument that the infliction of physical punishment and the command to love the neighbour were not opposed to each other; second, in the argument that God continued to rule human society through the rulers of this world. These powers are inclined to oppose God (as by nature they serve the devil), but can be converted unto service to Christ and the Church.

In this period, however, Augustine does not yet want to make use of these means, because he hopes that the schismatics are receptive to the words of correction. As I have pointed out, this approach was deeply rooted in Augustine's view of brotherly correction.[286] The primary approach of the brother is one of mildness. 'A servant of the Lord must not strive, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness correcting those that think otherwise' (2 Tim. 2:24–5).[287] Brotherly correction should aim to persuade the brother of his mistakes, so that internal conversion can take place. Although Augustine was not principally opposed to state-sponsored coercion, he regarded it as ancillary to teaching by words. Temporal punishments can assume an ancillary function in the process of teaching, in order to 'shock' the unwilling recipient and facilitate the possibility of reflection.[288]

Augustine's Ministerial Exercise of Discipline

Augustine's discipline and the laetitiae

In a number of letters from the period of his priesthood Augustine makes us part of the pastoral problems with which his congregation confronted him. One of these concerned the exuberant celebration of the feasts of the martyrs, the so-called *laetitiae* or *refrigeria.*[289] The licentious way in which these feasts were celebrated seems to have been generally accepted among African

for idolatry (*ep.* 43). Augustine justified temporal punishment by the state *in religiosis*, but emphasized its medicinal character. See Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration*, 61–3.

[286] Gerald Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (Norwich: SCM Press Ltd, 1986[2]), 302.

[287] Text quoted in *exp. Gal.* 56.

[288] In *Simpl.* 1,2,22 Augustine gives the example of Saul whose will was first 'thrown back through severity' (*saeuitia retorqueretur*) and then 'corrected unto faith' (*et corrigetur ad fidem*). Christ violently struck Saul down, in order to repress his raging, furious, and blind will (*quam rabida uoluntas, quam furiosa, quam caeca*). This action created the circumstances in which Paul could receive the effective call of grace by which he was converted.

[289] On the cult of the martyrs and the *laetitiae*, see V. Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles: les témoignages de Tertullien, Cyprien et Augustin à la lumière de l'archéologie africaine* (Paris: Édition Beauchesne, 1980); Y. Duval, *Loca Sanctorum Africae: le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IVe au VIIe siècle, deux vol.* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1982). See on Augustine's correspondence concerning this issue also Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian*, 130–5.

Christians. In *Epistulae* 22, written to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage, Augustine criticizes the duplicity within the disciplinary practice of the African Church. Some sins are severely sanctioned, such as sexual impurity. Those who make themselves culpable of sexual sins are banned from ecclesiastical offices and even from the Eucharist.[290] Other sins, however, such as strife and drunkenness, are tolerated and almost no longer regarded as vices at all.[291] The habit of celebrating the *laetitiae* testifies to the general acceptance of drunkenness. African Christians are used to extravagant eating and drinking in honour of the martyrs, not only at home, but even at the martyr's shrines and in the churches. It had become part and parcel of their experience of Christianity as such. In *Epistula* 29 Augustine argues that this is to be explained from the time that crowds of pagans entered the Church at the beginning of the third century. As many of them were held back from becoming Christian because this obliged them to stop celebrating the feast days of their idols, the bishops of that time had decided to have patience with the weakness of the crowds by allowing them to celebrate their feasts, but now in honour of the Christian martyrs. The bishops hoped that once these people subjected themselves to the authority of Christ, they would gradually learn to obey the commandments of sobriety out of respect for their Lord.[292] Despite these resolutions, however, the extravagant feasting had been tolerated until now and had become an integral part of African Christianity.

In response to this practice, Augustine proposes a reform programme to Aurelius, starting with the exclusion of these practices from public worship places: the tombs of the martyrs and the churches. Celebrations at home are to be tolerated, but the faithful are admonished not to join those who organize such feasts in their private festivities. The body of the Lord is to be received together with such people, but one should not eat with them in private, in order to teach such brothers and sisters that they alienate themselves from the Christian community by such behaviour (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11). In this way, Augustine hopes that 'the wound inflicted by this custom' can be healed. Augustine believes, however, that such measures can only be effective if the African bishops decide to promote them together. If only some bishops prohibit the practices, people might cross over to another diocese and continue their practice there.[293] Therefore, Augustine proposes that either the

[290] *ep.* 22,3, CSEL 34,1,56: '*Horum ergo trium cubilia et inpudicitiae ita magnum crimen putatur, ut nemo dignus non modo ecclesiastico ministerio, sed ipsa etiam sacramentorum communione uideatur, qui se isto peccato maculauerit. et recte omnino*.'

[291] *ep.* 22,2, CSEL 34,1,56: '*Duo autem reliqua, id est primum et ultimum, tolerabilia uidentur hominibus atque ita paulatim fieri potest, ut nec uitia iam putentur*.'

[292] *ep.* 29,9.

[293] On the phenomenon of 'cross-overs' to flee local church discipline, see Brent Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), ch. 2.

Church of Carthage starts to impose these measures as an example to the other churches, or that Aurelius organizes a council where the African bishops decide together.

Furthermore, Augustine proposes the education of the people. Only through education can the habit be eradicated from their hearts. He writes to Aurelius:

> What was deplorable then must now be eliminated, not harshly, but in a spirit of gentleness and kindness, as scripture says (*Gal.* 6:1) . . . these practices, then, are eliminated, in my opinion, not with harshness (*non aspere*), not with toughness (*non duriter*), not in an imperious manner (*non modo imperioso*), but by teaching rather than by commanding (*docendo quam iubendo*), by admonition rather than threatening (*monendo quam minando*). For one has to deal with the multitude in that way, but severity should be applied to the sins of the few. And if we use any threat, let it be done with sorrow, by threatening from the scriptures with the punishments of the future, not so that we ourselves are feared in our power, but so that God is feared in our words (*ne nos ipsi in nostra potestate, sed deus in nostro sermone timeatur*). In that way the spiritual people or those close to spiritual people will first be moved, and by their authority the remaining multitude will be subdued by even the gentlest, but most insistent, admonitions.[294]

Augustine thus proposes to first approach the crowd with gentle admonitions. He probably does so because he is dealing with a habit that is hardly considered a vice. The people have to be educated first as to why this habit does not fit with the Christian life. Augustine expects that the *spiritales* in the Church will be moved first.[295] By their authority they might then persuade the multitude. Only the few should be rebuked severely, with reference to God's future judgement. Augustine does not explain why and when this should happen to these few. I assume that the threat of divine punishment functions as a second step in the disciplinary process. Augustine approaches

[294] *ep.* 22,5, CSEL 34,1,58: '*Sed quod erat tunc dolendum, nunc auferendum est non aspere, sed, sicut scriptum est, in spiritu lenitatis et mansuetudinis [Gal. 6,1; 1 Cor. 4,21] . . . non ergo aspere, quantum existimo, non duriter, non modo imperioso ista tolluntur, magis docendo quam iubendo, magis monendo quam minando. Sic enim agendum est cum multitudine, seueritas autem exercenda est in peccata paucorum. et si quid minamur, cum dolore fiat de scripturis comminando uindictam futuram, ne nos ipsi in nostra potestate, sed deus in nostro sermone timeatur. ita prius mouebuntur spiritales uel spiritalibus proximi, quorum auctoritate et lenissimis quidem sed instantissimis admonitionibus cetera multitudo frangatur*' (WSA 2/1, 60, slightly adapted).

[295] In his early writings, the *homines spiritales* form a group of learned believers, who enjoy either charismatic or ministerial authority, are characterized by a love of God and the neighbour (*uera rel.* 24 and 58), and are engaged in serving their fellow believers with admonition, teaching, and refutation of heresy. Cf. also Gal. 6:1, the text to which Augustine alludes in *ep.* 22,5: '*fratres, etsi praeoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, vos, qui spiritales estis, instruite huiusmodi in spiritu lenitatis, intendens teipsum, ne et tu temteris*.' On the *homo spiritalis* theme in Augustine's work, see Cornelius Mayer, 'Augustins Lehre vom "homo spiritalis"', in *Homo Spiritalis. Festgabe für Luc Verheijen OSA zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, edited by Cornelius Mayer and Karl Heinz Chelius (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1987), 3–60.

Christians from the assumption that the new man prevails in them over the old. Therefore, the disciplinary process starts with gentle instruction. If they, however, persist in the practices of the old man, resisting the will of God, they need a severer admonition, namely the announcement of divine judgement upon those who intentionally hold on to the life of the old man.[296]

The general council to which Augustine alluded in *Epistula* 22 was organized by Aurelius of Carthage in 393 in Hippo Regius. The canons of this council show that it intended a complete reform of the African Church, especially with regard to the clergy.[297] Canon 29 deals with the *laetitiae*. It stipulates 'that no bishops or clerics will have banquets in the Church, unless perhaps to refresh those who pass by, if necessity requires that they receive hospitality there; the people, however, should be prohibited to have these kind of meals, as far as possible'.[298] This prohibition was reissued at the council of Carthage in 397, which probably indicates the difficulty of putting the law into practice.[299] After 393 Augustine called on the authority of a council to put the proposed prohibitions into practice: the *laetitiae* should be banned from holy places. *Epistula* 29, however, written around 395 to Alypius, shows that this law met with fierce resistance from the side of the congregation. Augustine writes that on Ascension Eve, a few days before the *laetitia* in honour of Hippo's martyr-bishop Leontius, the people caused uproar, saying that they could not bear the prohibition to celebrate the 'solemnity' together in the Church. During the following days, Augustine preaches a series of sermons in which he addresses the issue again. What strikes the reader in these sermons, in contrast to *Letter* 22, is that Augustine does not choose a mild, educative approach. He no longer considers his flock as ignorant, but as obstinate and proud. Although they know better now, they desire to live out their carnal appetites under the cover of religion. Commenting on Matt. 7:6 ('Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not cast your pearls before swine'), Augustine announces that they will be put to shame (*cogerentur erubescere*) if they continue to oppose the commandments of God. At the end of the sermon he adds that 'if they continued to do it in their homes, it would be necessary to exclude them (*eos arcere oporteret*) from what is holy and from the pearls in

[296] Recall the rule of discipline that Augustine formulated in *mor.* 1,56, CSEL 90,60: '*Agit ergo his gradibus, quod ad animum pertinet, ut primo timeat deinde diligat Deum. Hi mores sunt optimi, per quos nobis etiam ipsa prouenit, ad quam omni studio rapimur, agnitio ueritatis*'; and *uera rel.* 33, CCL 32,207: '*Pietas timore incoatur, caritate perficitur.*'

[297] J. E. Merdinger (*Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 72–3) speaks of the council of Hippo as 'a cleansing of a veritable Augean stable', echoing the judgement of W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 257.

[298] *Breviarium Hipponense* 29, CCSL 149,41: '*Ut nulli episcopi uel clerici in ecclesia conuiuentur, nisi forte transeuntes hospitiorum necessitate illic reficiant; populi etiam ab huiusmodi conuiuiis, quantum potest, prohibeantur.*'

[299] Lancel, *St. Augustine*, 157.

the Church.'[300] It might well be that Augustine refers here to exclusion from the Lord's Supper. Whereas he had first tolerated the domestic celebration of the martyr feasts, education and conciliar authority have increased the congregants' responsibility. The level of discipline becomes severer now. Not just brotherly rebuke through the refusal of table fellowship at home, but exclusion from the Eucharist awaits those who persevere in their sins.

Although Augustine's first sermon was received favourably, it had a minor effect, as only a small group of people were present in the church. Outside the walls of the church, however, the sermon met with critique from those who were not present, but who heard of it from others.[301] Therefore, Augustine prepared a sermon for Ascension Day, in which he would address the problem again, this time for a larger crowd. In this sermon, Augustine compares his congregants, people from the New Testament, with the Jews, the people of the Old Testament. He first draws their attention to Christ's cleansing of the temple. If Christ already drove those out of God's house who were selling necessary goods for the prescribed sacrifices, how much more furious would Christ enter this Church in judgement? Subsequently, Augustine turns to the history of the golden calf (Exod. 32). He emphasizes that the Jews were never found drunk in the name of true religion (as Augustine's own congregants are), except when they celebrated a feast after they fashioned the golden calf. Augustine then adds: 'After I said this, I also took up the book and read out the whole passage.'[302] This is not an unimportant addition, for it suggests what Augustine aimed at in addressing his flock. The narrative ends with a massacre among the Israelites as a punishment for their idolatry. By relating this Old Testament story, Augustine tacitly suggests that his congregants awaits an even severer punishment, as they, people of the New Testament, commit the same sins, yet not once, but frequently, and, moreover, in the name of true religion.

Augustine does not only announce a severer punishment on his flock, because their sins are more serious than those of Israel, but also because the grace they received is greater. Paul distinguishes the Christians from the hardhearted Jews by describing them as 'his letter, written not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of hearts of flesh' (2 Cor. 3:3). Christians are indwelled by the Spirit, who makes them receptive to the law of God. This implies, Augustine further explains, that he is entitled to expect from his congregants that his preaching breaks their heart, just as Moses broke the tablets of stone, when he was confronted with the sins of the people.[303] If they are people of the

[300] *ep.* 29,3, CSEL 34,1,115: '… *sancto et margaritis ecclesiasticis eo arceri* …' Cf. *s.* 60A where Augustine describes the barking dogs and the pigs as those people who enjoy their carnal pleasures and do not see the need to repent and receive forgiveness.

[301] *ep.* 29,3. [302] *ep.* 29,4.

[303] *ep.* 29,4, CSEL 34,1,115: '*Addidi etiam cum dolore, quo potui, quoniam apostolus ait ad discernendum populum christianum a duritia Iudaeorum epistulam suam non in tabulis lapideis*

New Testament, cleansed from sin, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9–11), 'how can you still tolerate in your heart, that is the temple of God, such filth of concupiscence against which the kingdom of the heavens is closed?'[304] Quoting Paul from Gal. 5:19–21 and 1 Cor. 6:9, Augustine warns them that if they hold on to these works of the flesh, and do not display the fruits of the Spirit, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. He also warns those who associate with people who have these banquets in their homes. By associating with persistent sinners they demonstrate their approval of their wicked deeds and are therefore guilty of the same sins (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11).[305]

Augustine considers his responsibility as a preacher to be a heavy burden. He identifies with the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who characterized himself as a watchman, who was called to warn his people for God's approaching judgement (Ezek. 33:9). Christ has endowed Augustine with this responsibility and he will have to render an account of it.[306] However, Augustine does not consider his own responsibility to be ultimate. At the end of the sermon he assures his flock that he trusts in him 'who cannot lie and who promised through the mouth of his prophet concerning Jesus Christ, *If his children abandon my law and do not walk in my commandments, if they profane my ordinances, I shall visit their crimes with the rod and their sins with scourges, but I shall not take away my mercy* (Ps. 89:31–34). I said, therefore, that I trusted in him that, if they scorned all these words that were read and spoken to them, he would visit them with the rod and scourge, but would not allow them to be condemned along with this world (allusion to 1 Cor. 11:32).'[307] Augustine thus believes that God himself will somehow intervene with corrective punishment, to convert those for whom the discipline of words was not enough. Augustine might have had Paul in mind here, who mourned to the Lord about the unrepentant attitude of the Corinthians, asking God 'to obtain

scriptam sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus [2 Cor. 3,3], cum Moyses famulus dei propter illos principes binas lapideas tabulas confregisset, quo modo non possemus istorum corda confringere, qui homines noui testamenti sanctorum diebus celebrandis ea uellent sollemniter exhibere, quae populus ueteris testamenti et semel et idolo celebrauit.'

[304] *ep.* 29,5. [305] *ep.* 29,5. [306] *ep.* 29,7.

[307] *ep.* 29,7. Augustine also uses Ps. 89:31–4 to interpret the sack of Rome in *ciu.* 1,10, CCL 47,11: 'It is fitting that even the discipline of experience is added to them, who for a long time neglected the discipline of words'*(oportebat enim ut eis adderetur etiam experimentorum disciplina, a quibus tam diu fuerat neglecta uerborum*). In *c. ep. Parm.* 3,14 Augustine quotes a passage from Cyprian's *De lapsis* 6, in which the latter also uses Ps. 89:31–4 to interpret persecutions as God's corrective punishment of a Church that leads a worldly life. Also Cyprian stresses that God warns through the words of Scripture and if the Church does not listen, the harder medicine of actual punishment is inflicted, as Cyprian's flock is currently experiencing. See *laps.* 7, CCL 3,224: '*Praenuntiata sunt ista nobis et ante praedicta. Sed nos, datae legis et obseruationis inmemores, id egimus per nostra peccata ut, dum domini mandata contemnimus, ad correptionem delicti et probationem fidei remediis seuerioribus ueniremus.*'

a rod . . . by which they would be corrected'.[308] If the human minister of the flock has acquitted himself of his job and does not see any effect, he may put his hope in the personal intervention of the Lord to save his own. This trust in God's own intervention illustrates Augustine's theology of predestination in practice.[309]

Although this second sermon moved the people to tears and filled Augustine with hope of their correction, the next day it was reported to him that there were still many people who complained about the prohibition of the *laetitiae*. When Augustine heared this, he resolved to read the passage from Ezekiel: *The lookout is acquitted if he reported the danger, even if those to whom it is reported refuse to beware* (Ezek. 33:9) 'and to shake the dust from his clothes and leave' (Matt. 10:14). But 'then the Lord showed that he does not abandon us and showed how he exhorts us to place our trust in him'.[310] An hour before Augustine was about to start his sermon, the complainers came to him and he was able to bring them to a right opinion with a few words. These words show how Augustine experienced in practice what he will later express in the anti-Donatist formula: '*Foris inveniatur necessitas, nascitur intus voluntas*.'[311] Augustine is called to report the danger, but God gives repentance. In response to the complainers' sudden change of attitude, Augustine abandoned his first resolve and devotes his sermon to explaining how the habit of extravagant *laetitiae* had arisen and why it should be prohibited now (see above) and that the Africans should be imitators of the Italian Churches, 'in which these practices had never been accepted and in part corrected by good pastors with the obedience of the people'.[312] At the end of the sermon, Augustine 'saw that all were with singleness of heart beginning to have a good will and had rejected their bad habit'.[313]

We do not know, of course, how strong this good will would prove to be in the future. In any case, Augustine's account of his disciplinary activities

[308] *c. ep. Parm.* 3,14, CSEL 51,117: '*Quid aliud hic dixit: non parcam [2 Cor. 13,2] nisi quod superius ait: et lugeam [2 Cor. 12,21], ut luctus eius impetraret flagellum a domino, quo illi corriperentur . . .*'

[309] It also testifies to Augustine's view on the relationship between church unity and discipline. If it is impossible to expel evildoers from the congregation, because there are too many of them, one should not abandon them, thus causing a schism, but sigh to God for their improvement, and bear with them until they convert, or until the final separation at the end of time. Augustine expresses this idea already in *Ps. c. Don.* 288–9, ed. Anastasi 70: '*Expello malos quos possum, quos non possum cogor ferre, fero illos donec sanentur, aut separentur in fine*.' Cf. Weijland, *Augustinus en de kerkelijke tucht*, 60.

[310] *ep.* 29,8. [311] *s.* 112,8.

[312] *ep.* 29,10. It is interesting to notice that Augustine gets the objection that in the 'basilica of the blessed Peter' in Rome daily drunkenness does take place. Augustine has to admit that the bishops do not have the power in that big city to completely control the great multitude of carnal people. But he admonishes his people saying that if they want to honour Peter they should better listen to his epistle, and then reads 1 Pet. 4:1–3.

[313] *ep.* 29,10.

regarding the *laetitiae* illustrates both his view on discipline in general and the relationship between human correction and divine grace. As we have observed before, Augustine prefers the method of gentle teaching before threatening with divine judgement, especially when it concerns a sin that arises from ignorance among Christians. If they, however, persist in their habit and do not want to repent, Augustine threatens the people with the final judgement (emphasizing their greater responsibility compared to the people of the Old Testament). He also admonishes his flock to expose sinners publicly by not eating with them, thus showing the borders of the community and making them ashamed. A further way to effect this change of habit is exclusion from the Eucharist. If these efforts do not have the desired outcomes, Augustine takes recourse to God's own disciplinary intervention in the life of his people, so that they will not be condemned along with the world. This trust again illustrates one of the fundamental ideas in Augustine's understanding of ecclesiastical discipline, namely that it serves God's own pedagogy in the lives of his people. Augustine himself witnesses the surprising way in which God gives repentance at the point where human teachers have abandoned hope.

Augustine's discipline in the service of church unity

A second widespread sin that Augustine addresses in his letters is strife and jealousy (*contentio* and *dolus*) among the clergy, the other vice to which he referred in *Epistula* 22 as unjustifiably tolerated in the African Church. Augustine observes that ecclesiastical office bearers are easily driven by the desire for praise. They find the honour of their own name among men more important than the purity of their conscience before God. This desire results in jealousy, strife, and hypocrisy.[314]

In his letters Augustine emphasizes that what should count for a bishop or priest is not his personal honour, but rather a good conscience before God. Only if a bishop is independent from the praise of men, and strives to please God alone, is he able to act with right judgement in relation to the people over whom he has received authority.[315] In *Epistula* 22, Augustine confesses to Aurelius that he himself daily struggles with this vice: 'For only one who has declared war on this enemy feels its strength, because, even if it is easy for someone to do without praise when it is denied, it is difficult not to take delight in it when it is offered.'[316]

[314] *ep.* 22,7. The canons of the council of Carthage (390) illustrate that this vice led to schisms between clergy and to the usurpation of another's ecclesial territory. Cf. Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 359, 378–9. For the text of the canons that mention these abuses, see CCSL 149,16–18.

[315] *ep.* 22,8. [316] *ep.* 22,8.

Augustine's rebuke of this vice plays a role in his early correspondence with a Donatist colleague, Maximinus of Sitium (*Epistula* 23).[317] Augustine tries to win his colleague over by appealing to God's judgement over those who prefer the praise of men to a good conscience before God. He attempts to persuade the Donatist bishop to return to the Catholic Church by putting him before the judgement seat of Christ.[318] People had told Augustine that Maximinus was an exceptional Donatist, because he refused to rebaptize Catholics. Although Augustine did not believe this at first, he considered 'that it is possible that the fear of God entered the human soul reflecting on the future life so that it held itself back from a most evident crime'.[319] This consideration filled Augustine with hope of reunion with his schismatic colleague, for if Maximinus acknowledges the validity of Catholic baptism, he in fact rejects the legitimacy of the Donatist schism. Unfortunately, Augustine had heard that Maximinus had rebaptized the Catholic deacon Muttugenna. In his letter to Maximinus, he asks him for clarification of this matter, but until Maximinus himself confirms this rumour, Augustine continues to believe the best of him.

Augustine continues his letter by appealing to Maximinus' alleged fear of God. Augustine believes that although Maximinus holds the right beliefs, and therefore fears to rebaptize a Catholic, his belief is not yet bold enough to publicly confess the truth and risk the rejection of his Donatist colleagues. He fears the loss of his honourable position more than God's judgement over him. In response, Augustine tries to convince Maximinus to act according to his beliefs by appealing to Christ's future judgement:

> In the sight of Christ do not fear the reproach or do not be terrified at the power of a human being. The honour of the world is passing; its pride is passing. In Christ's future judgement neither pulpits furnished with steps nor thrones with canopies, nor flocks of processing and chanting nuns will be called to our defence when our consciences begin to accuse us and the judge of our conscience begins to pass judgement. Those things which here are honours will there be burdens; those things which here raise us up will then pull us down. These honours which are shown to us for a time on account of the good of the Church will perhaps be

[317] On this letter, see also Ebeller, *Disciplining Christians*, 69–75.

[318] *ep.* 23 is often cited to show that the early Augustine rejected military force to compel schismatics to unity, and opted for peaceful dialogue. See Paul van Geest and Vincent Hunink, *Met zachte hand: Augustinus over dwang in kerk en maatschappij* (Budel: Damon, 2012), 32–3; Frend, 'Augustine and State Authority', 56–7. This is correct, but one should not forget that Augustine already makes use of spiritual coercion by referring to Christ's future judgement. His early attitude to the Donatists should not be misperceived as a form of dialogue in a modern, ecumenical fashion.

[319] *ep.* 23,2, CSEL 34,1,68: '[*Fateor, primo non credidi.*] *Deinde considerans posse fieri, ut animam humanam de futura uita cogitantem dei timor inuaderet, ut se ab scelere apertissimo temperaret* . . .' (WSA, 1/2, 64).

> defended by a good conscience, but they will not be able to defend a bad conscience.[320]

If Maximinus believes that rebaptism is a crime against Christ in heaven, whose sign (of baptism) must be approved of wherever it is found, he at present lives in sin before God.[321] The honour he receives as a Donatist bishop obfuscates this reality. But when the praise of men has passed, only the testimony of a bad conscience remains.[322] Then Maximinus will have to bear the consequences of his preference for human praise over the praise of Christ. Augustine hopes that this announcement of future judgement will persuade Maximinus to bear the suffering that a bold confession of his faith will bring along. Augustine admonishes him: 'Why do you not go out . . . and say: . . . I do not destroy what I recognize as the Lord's; I do not subject to exsufflation the standard of my king.'[323] If Maximinus fears Christ more than his peers, unity is only a matter of time.

Augustine not only attempts to inspire Maximinus with the fear of Christ as a counterbalance to his fear of his peers. He also instils this fear with regard to Maximinus' responsibility for his flock. We both have to give an account to Christ of how we cared for his flock and laboured for their salvation, Augustine argues. Augustine writes about himself: 'I cannot be silent about our deacon who was rebaptized, for I know how dangerous for me such silence is. After all, I do not plan to pass my time in the vanity of ecclesiastical honours; rather, I bear in mind that I will give an account to the prince of all pastors about the sheep entrusted to me.'[324] The thought of having to give an account to the prince of all pastors stimulates Augustine to save people from the destruction (*pernicies*) that is to come, not only those who are still in the Catholic Church, but also those who belong to her but are at present cut off from the vine of the Lord through schism.[325]

[320] *ep.* 23,3, CSEL 34,1,66–7: '*Non cuiusquam hominis in contemplatione Christi aut reprehensionem uerearis aut exhorreas potestatem. Transit honor huius saeculi, transit ambitio. In futuro Christi iudicio nec absidae gradatae nec cathedrae uelatae nec sancti monialium occursantium atque cantantium greges adhibebuntur ad defensionem, ubi coeperit accusare conscientia et conscientiarum arbiter iudicare. Quae hic honorant, ibi onerant; quae hic releuant, ibi grauant. Ista quae pro tempore propter ecclesiae utilitatem honori nostro exhibentur, defendentur forte bona conscientia, defendere autem non poterunt malam.*' (WSA 2/1, 64–5).

[321] *ep.* 23,4, CSEL 34,1,67: '*Cur non discissis . . . et dicis: non destruo, quod dominicum agnosco, non exsufflo uexillum regis mei?*' (WSA 1/2, 65).

[322] Augustine calls the praise of men 'the old skins of timid servitute' (*veterae pelles timidae seruitutis*). Cf. *Gn. adu. Man.* 2,32.

[323] *ep.* 23,4.

[324] *ep.* 23,6, CSEL 34,1,70: '*Ego rebaptizato diacono nostro silere non possum; scio enim, quam mihi silentium perniciosum sit. non enim cogito in ecclesiasticis honoribus tempora uentosa transigere, sed cogito me principi pastorum omnium rationem de commissis ouibus redditurum.*' (translation: WSA 1/2, 67).

[325] *ep.* 23,6.

Augustine thus tries to compel his colleague to unity by reminding him that Christ will ask him whom he has sought to please as a bishop, and how he has taken care of the flock of Christ that was entrusted to him.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has investigated Augustine's thought on the salvific function of divine judgement in the works that he composed during the period of his priesthood until his ordination as a bishop. Particularly Augustine's engagement with Paul against the Manichees and his new responsibilities as an ecclesiastical office bearer accounted for developments in his thought.

The Punishment of Sin and Free Will

The first part of this chapter addressed Augustine's polemic with the Manichees concerning the effects of the first sin on the human will. His Manichaean opponents interpreted Paul's discourse on the battle between flesh and spirit as confirming their dualist understanding of the human person. Augustine attempted to reclaim Paul from the Manichees in order to uphold the forensic understanding of the relationship between God and man, which he had adopted via Ambrose and had defended in his early writings. God deals with humans according to their merits, and in order to have merit, one needs to possess freedom of the will. The experience of compulsion and division of the will must therefore be interpreted as a divine punishment for human sin. Augustine increasingly emphasizes man's inability to return to God, up to the point that he even comes to deny that a humble response to the divine call has any meritorious value (*Ad Simplicianum*).

Although I argued in Chapter 3 that Augustine had always held a strong view of human fallenness, he continued to ascribe an independent role to the human will in the process of Christian transformation. We encountered this idea in *De libero arbitrio* 1 and in his progressivist view of sanctification. This explicit appeal to the place of free will further surfaces in Augustine's discussion of grace in his commentaries on Romans and Galatians and in *De libero arbitrio* 3. In these works, it serves an anti-Manichaean purpose. God's goodness is reconciled with his judgement over sin in that man, although he suffers the punishment of sin in his members, has retained the possibility of humbling himself upon the call of the divine law, which he encounters through general revelation or through the special care of God (in an ecclesiastical context). By appealing to free will, Augustine clearly represents the anti-dualist tradition as expounded by Clement and Origen. They

interpreted God's punishment of sin as merely pedagogical: it confronted man with his own sins and granted him the opportunity to entrust himself to God's grace.

Augustine abandons this idea in *Ad Simplicianum* 1,2. He comes to deny that man has retained any freedom to respond with conversion to the divine call. God's condemnation of humanity in Adam is primarily retributive. Only those whom God singles out to be justified of the penal consequences of the first sin (and subsequent sins) benefit from the evil they still suffer. In those who remain part of the *massa damnata*, the divine call only meets resistance and confirms the non-elect in their condemned position. It seems that Augustine's reappropriation of Paul against the Manichees has led him to a paradox that the tradition before him had avoided. On the one hand, he confirms man's full moral responsibility before God, but on the other hand he denies that man is able to use this responsibility in the right way; he has lost this freedom completely in Adam.

The Function of the Law in Relation to Christ

This development went along with Augustine's appropriation of Paul's theology of law and grace. Previously, Augustine had understood the relationship between Christ and the law within a pedagogical framework. The Old Testament law foreshadowed the teaching of Christ and coerced its carnal subjects into obedience through fear of punishment. This pedagogical framework defines Augustine's interpretation of the Pauline duality between law and grace in the early 390s. In *De utilitate credendi* Augustine defends the goodness of the law against the Manichees, arguing that Paul's characterization of the law as a killing letter refers to its effect upon those who do not understand it. The law as a pedagogue taught in an obscure and coercive way what Christ would teach his pupils in a plain and convincing manner. Augustine understands the Pauline statement that the grace of Christ has freed us from servitude to the law epistemologically: Christ the teacher liberates reason from the dominion of the passions, so that the mind no longer experiences the law as coercive, but as convincing; it wants to be educated by it.

When Augustine begins to comment on Romans and Galatians in 394, he expands this pedagogical understanding of the relationship between Christ and the law. In Augustine's new interpretation, the letter that kills not only refers to its not being understood, but also to its not being fulfilled. It is there to bring its hearers to the knowledge of their guilt before God and of their liability to condemnation. The pedagogue assumes the function of plaintiff who brings its hearers to despair about their status before God. They need a new juridical position before Him. Although both soteriological frameworks ascribe to Christ a uniquely mediating role, the latter emphasizes that the

renewal of man requires the forgiveness of an objective guilt. Sin's effects can only be undone if the juridical ground on which sin rules over humanity have been removed. This had been an underestimated aspect in Augustine's pedagogical understanding of Christianity.

The Development of Augustine's Understanding of Christ's Death

The change in Augustine's understanding of the law went along with an evolution in his understanding of the death of Christ. His polemical appropriation of Paul forces Augustine to think about the historical uniqueness of Christ's incarnation and death. Augustine's pedagogical Christology shared an important characteristic of Manichaean Christology, namely that it focused on Christ as a teacher. Furthermore, it interpreted Paul's expressions about Christ as having been made sin for us, or as bearing our sins, or as being made a curse for us, as referring to the suffering of the soul under the powers of evil, which Jesus on the cross exemplified. In his sufferings, Christ exposed the cruelty of the God of the Old Testament. Augustine's struggle with Paul in conversation with the Manichees helped him to achieve a deeper understanding of the salvific meaning of Christ's death as more than exemplary teaching. In *Contra Adimantum*, his commentary on Galatians, and *Ad Simplicianum*, Augustine comes to argue that God executed the curse of the law on Christ, in order to set those who believe in him free from the power of sin, death and devil. In *De libero arbitrio* Augustine argues the same idea from another perspective. The devil, who had received the right to exercise power over humanity through the fear of death, was deprived of this right by putting the righteous one to death, so that all who are in Christ can be released from sin without violating the law of righteousness. In *en. Ps.* 21 Augustine makes his case within the context of his *totus Christus* idea. Christ thus identifies with the person of the old man on the cross, suffers its punishment, and communicates the righteousness that is proper to his own person to the Church. In Christ, believers have been released from the debt of condemnation, which they owed because of their sins, and receive the rights of being fully released from the *poena peccati*.

Although Augustine does not explicitly connect his Christology to his doctrine of predestination, nonetheless, the connection is logically there. If man deserves condemnation, and the only way to be released from this condition is through the death of the old man in the body of Christ, then the appeal to free will as the merit that grounds the reception of his grace (as Augustine still has it in the *Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos*) becomes a '*Fremdkörper*' in the concept of salvation.

The Function of Temporal Punishment and the Fear of God in the Christian Life

This juridical move in Augustine's Christology also appears in his way of conceptualizing the Christian life. Through faith in Christ, sins are forgiven. This implies that man is no longer bound to suffer final punishment. His will is liberated to fulfil the law, rather than to suffer its condemnation. However, God does not remove the temporal punishments for sin. This would contradict his righteousness. God rather uses them towards the end of the Christian's education in righteousness (*disciplina iustitiae*). Augustine applies these ideas both to corporeal suffering, and to the assault of *consuetudo*. Both of these punishments have a pedagogical function in the life of Christians.

Further, Augustine ceases to conceptualize the Christian life in terms of gradual ascent. He comes to speak of the Christian life in a rather undifferentiated way as life *sub gratia*. The life under grace can be described as a continuous exercise to return to the grace of Christ. At this point, an element that occurred earlier in the *Soliloquia* recurs: God allows the believer to become entangled in the sin, in order to deepen his awareness that sanctification is a gift of God in Christ, rather than something of which he himself disposes. This element had been present in Augustine's thought from very early on, but now becomes increasingly embedded in a non-progressivist view of the Christian life. The law of God no longer merely functions as a means to purify the will towards virtue, but rather as an incentive to continuously confess one's sins and plead for God's promise of forgiveness and healing. Augustine will further develop this idea in the *Confessions*.

Church Discipline

Having been forced into the priesthood, Augustine had to assume responsibility for a congregation which consisted of different kinds of Christians, many of whom were still largely pagan. Furthermore, he was confronted with the drawing force of a Donatist counter-Church, and the influence of Manichaeism. Simultaneously, he continued to reflect upon the organization of the life in his own religious community (and the communities that were established under its inspiration).

First, I described Augustine's discourse on fraternal correction. Just as in the Cassiciacum Dialogues, Augustine emphasizes that the one who rebukes might himself be driven by baser desires than the love of truth itself. Therefore, Augustine contends that reflection upon one's motives needs to precede the decision to rebuke the brother. In this respect, Augustine's thought reflects the ancient pedagogical notion that one who intends to cure another's mind must

first possess soundness of mind himself; his medical imagery recalls that ancient context.[326] At the same time, Augustine's view of mutual correction became more distinctly Christian. This comes to the fore in his understanding of the love that should motivate Christian rebuke. The brother is loved not on the basis of his own moral capacities, but as one for whom Christ has died. It is the grace of Christ that should motivate the believer to bear with the sins of the other, to apply corrective words with good hope of conversion, and to do this with humility.

In Augustine's reflections on discipline in his religious community, we received more insight into his understanding of the different levels of discipline: from mutual rebuke, to corrective punishment, to exclusion from the community. In the description of discipline in his religious community, Augustine first repeats the need for mutual rebuke. Through mutual vigilance God himself protects the community against sin. If the brother does not want to listen, however, he is to be confronted with the weightier authority of the *praepositus*, who represents God to the community. It is hoped that his words will inspire the sinner with the fear of God himself. The *praepositus* is also endowed with the right to apply corrective punishments to the sinner. However, before these can be applied, the alleged sinner deserves a fair juridical process, in order to prevent the accused from becoming the victim of the evil intentions of others. If the sinner is convicted, he must undergo punishments. Even if he repents at that moment, he needs to undergo them, not as satisfaction for sin, but rather as cure of his soul. The *praepositus* should reflect upon which penal measures would be the most effective for the healing of the sinner. If he does not want to subject himself to this 'surgery', the last remedial measure consists of *proiectio*, the expulsion of the sinner from the community. This is done both to restrain the negative effects of sin on the congregation, but also to restrain the sinner from seducing others. Furthermore, this excommunication is a sign of a spiritual reality: the sinner's alienation from the kingdom of God and his grace. As such it is meant as a final admonition to return.

In the 390s Augustine thus proves to develop his thought on the place of temporal punishment in the context of communal discipline. This confirms our findings in Chapter 3, where we concluded that the Church in the time of the New Testament does not differ from Israel with regard to its need of temporal restraint. The Church starts with teaching, but can be called to apply severer medicines if the state of the patient requires it. The development of Augustine's thought on this matter also appears in his justification of corporeal punishment administered in the time of the New Testament. Against the Manichees who oppose the violence of the Old Testament to the love

[326] He applies this insight to the Donatists who, according to Augustine, raged against the Catholics, and because of that did not see the speck in their own eye.

commanded by Jesus in the New Testament, Augustine argues that severity and love can go together in the application of punishment. However, one needs to possess the God-given position to apply these punishments. In this regard, the Church of the New Testament differs from the Church in the Old Testament, as it is no longer ruled by a king who possesses coercive power. The New Testament Church lives under the physical authority of the rulers of this age (*potestates huius mundi*). Augustine approaches worldly rulership with suspicion, because it is exercised by fallen humans. As Robert Markus has observed, Augustine breaks with the optimistic Platonic ideal of a state that educates its citizen. However, he simultaneously shares in the post-Constantinian experience that the rulers of this world can be converted and can use their coercive power in the service of the Church.

Augustine's own ministry also testifies to the different levels at which he exercised discipline over his flock. In his complaints about the *laetitiae*, he writes to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage that discipline should start with teaching (from the presupposition that their congregants do not err willingly and are teachable). Only when they prove obstinate should the bishop remind them of God's judgement, in order to reinvigorate the fear of God in them. This is exactly what Augustine does. He starts his campaign by explaining the origin of the habit, calls for repentance, and admonishes his congregation to exercise mutual rebuke by not eating with those who organize *laetitiae* at their homes, according to Paul's injunction in 1 Corinthians 5. Furthermore, Augustine expects a lot from the disciplinary authority of a council, which could issue a general decree to ban the feasts from public worship places. This was done by the council of Hippo in 393, but Augustine's correspondence with Alypius testifies that there was still significant resistance to this measure. In this situation, Augustine takes recourse to God's own (violent) intervention to correct his children.

This shows that Augustine's exercise of discipline in his congregation differed from the exercise of discipline in his religious communities. Widespread sinful habits could not be eradicated through severe disciplinary measures (such as excommunication), without breaking the unity of the congregation. In this case, the disciplinarian followed the example of Paul, by invoking God's own disciplinary intervention. Augustine believes that all discipline by humans eventually serves God's own discipline of his people. Therefore, it may be expected that if God's people do not listen to the words of his human servants, they must expect God to use other means to correct them, so that they are not condemned with the world. It might be that Augustine used a similar way of reasoning in the case of the Donatists. He initially accepted the appeal to the state for no other purpose than to restrain Donatist violence, but when he witnessed the effects of the state laws on the Donatist congregation in Hippo, he perceived it as divine intervention. God himself had done through his providence, what human words had not been able to accomplish.

5

Confessions

God's Lawsuit with Augustine between the Deferral and the Reception of Baptism

INTRODUCTION

This chapter on the *Confessions* investigates how Augustine perceived the relationship between God's grace and his judgement in his own life. The present chapter differs from Chapters 2–4 in that it does not so much investigate a new period in Augustine's thinking, but rather asks how the insights gained in the previous chapters feature in the autobiography that he wrote at the beginning of his episcopate.[1] What does Augustine say about God's pedagogical use of evil in his life, the function of the law in relation to

[1] It is generally assumed that Augustine composed the *Confessions* between 397 and 401. P.-M. Hombert, however, holds that the composition of the work was interrupted early after 397. He presumes that books 1–9 were written in 400 and books 10–13 not before 403. See P.-M. Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2000), 9–23.

Augustine did not write the *Confessions* as an autobiography in the modern sense of the word. Rather, he relates his life from the perspective of God's providence in order to praise God in his justice and mercy, and to raise up the human mind and heart towards him. Cf. *retr.* 2,6,1, CCL 57,94: '*Confessionum mearum libri tredecim et de malis et de bonis meis deum laudant iustum et bonum, atque in eum excitant humanum intellectum et affectum.*' On this protreptic genre of the *Confessions*, see Annemaré Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions: Communicative Purpose and Audience* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2004).

Another peculiar aspect of the *Confessions* is the unity between the first ten books, which are autobiographical, and the last three, which present an exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis. Many proposals concerning the unity of the *Confessions* have been given. For a time it was thought that the *Confessions* were simply badly composed. This judgement was expressed (but later revoked) by Henry Irenéé Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1982), 75 ('Augustin compose mal'), and recently repeated by Lancel, *St. Augustine*, 209. However, many interesting proposals have been made as to the compositional unity of the work. For a survey of recent scholarship, see e.g. Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions*, 7–43. Two recent proposals, which both give a prominent place to the hexaemeron-structure, are given by Jared Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself: Creation in Augustine's Confessions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), ch. 5 and Napier, *En Route to the Confessions*, ch. 6.

grace, the disciplinary presence of the Church, Christ as the mediator of righteousness, and the function of judgement after conversion?

The main argument of this chapter is that Augustine describes the course of his life as a lawsuit of God with him, which began after the deferral of his baptism and Augustine's subsequent alienation from God and the Church, and was brought to a resolution when Augustine received baptism at the hands of Ambrose. As a child of Adam, Augustine was born as a man liable to condemnation. Although he could have been reborn to a life in the spirit through baptism, his mother deferred it, so that he was delivered to the dominion of his old nature and headed towards final condemnation. In retrospect, however, Augustine sees that God was always present to chastise him from without, and to illuminate him from within with the knowledge of his law, so that he would gradually come to see himself as a man under law, and confess his need for Christ the mediator of righteousness. I will argue that it is not Augustine's decision in the garden, but rather his reception of baptism that marks the decisive moment in his life, because it granted him a new juridical position before God. Formerly he deserved condemnation, because of the load of his sins. Now he deserves redemption from condemnation on account of Christ. Although after baptism, the penal effects of sin continue to battle against him, and render the final victory uncertain, the law no longer condemns him, because in Christ the powers of sin and death have been made void. This leads to a confessional use of the law. It helps Augustine to confess his sins, and thus to exercise himself in dependence on the grace of Christ. Moreover, grace has liberated him to present his own life in the light of God's law, in order to foster the conversion of others.

CREATION, SIN, AND PUNISHMENT: THE MIND MADE CAPTIVE TO THE LAW OF THE FLESH

Augustine's autobiography unfolds against the background of a primordial fall of humanity in Adam. Man was created to know and to love God through the things God had made. Augustine compares temporal creation to the recital of a poem, by which God admonishes man to ascend to the wisdom of the divine artist expressed therein.[2] Temporal creation is not a goal itself, but rather a vehicle by which God exhorts man to turn inward and ascend to the beauty and wisdom of the Creator that can be discerned by the mind. This is what it means to live according to the Spirit. If man lives according to the Spirit, he will eventually inherit a place in the 'heaven of heaven', the community of

[2] *conf.* 4,17.

spiritual beings that is elevated above time, and contemplates God without change and variation.[3]

However, man opted to seek his fulfilment in the realm of the senses.[4] He refused to use creation as a path towards God, but came to treat it as God's very substitute. He began to seek eternal truth and beatitude in the realm of time.[5] This sinful choice brought its own punishment along. Man lost his knowledge of the truth and his power to act in accordance with the truth. The wisdom of the flesh came to dominate his soul.

Augustine uses a variety of images to express the reality of sin and its penal consequences on the human soul. One of these images is the dark abyss (Gen. 1:2). As a consequence of Adam's disobedience, the soul as it were returned to its unformed state, before God enlightened it with his Word and ordered its love through his Spirit. Darkness symbolizes human ignorance of the truth,[6]

[3] The status of time is a contested issue in Augustinian studies. O'Connell and Teske, for example, have argued that Augustine treats time in the *Confessions* as a result of the fall. For their views, see R. J. O'Connell, *Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of the Soul* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003[5]), 135–44; Roland Teske, *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the Thought of St. Augustine* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 138–58. However, Augustine speaks of time as a creature of God, and as the condition in which man is allowed to grow towards likeness to God. It seems to me that Augustine regards temporal existence as a condition of the good, but not yet consummated, creation. Human existence in time is good, but participation in God's eternity is better. When Augustine speaks negatively of man's existence in time (as he does, for example in *conf.* 11,39–40, a text to which O'Connell and Teske also refer), he does so on account of human sin. As a consequence of man's disordered love for temporal things, his identity has lost its unity and has become dispersed in time (Cf. G. O'Daly, 'Time as Distentio and Augustine's Exegesis of Philippians 3:12–14', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 23/3–4 (1977), 265–71. Christ restores human identity not by liberating man from time as such, but by liberating man's will from its dispersion in temporal things.

On the concept of 'the heaven of heaven' (*caelum caeli*) in the *Confessions*, see Cornelius Peter Mayer, '"Caelum caeli": Ziel und Bestimmung des Menschen nach der Auslegung von "Genesis I,I f."', in *Die Confessiones des Augustinus von Hippo. Einführung und Interpretationen zu den 13 Büchern*, edited by N. Fischer and C. P. Mayer (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 2004), 553–601; Teske, *To Know God and the Soul*, 259–74; Jean Pépin, 'Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression "Caelum caeli" dans le livre XII des "Confessions" de saint Augustin', *Archivum latinitatis Medii Aevi* 23 (1953), 185–274.

[4] *conf.* 6,1, CCL 27,73: '*Et ambulabam per tenebras et lubricum et quaerebam te foris a me et non inueniebam deum cordis mei.*' *conf.* 7,11, CCL 27,100: '*. . . ante te erat desiderium meum et lumen oculorum meorum non erat mecum [Ps. 37,9–11]. Intus enim erat, ego autem foris, nec in loco illud.*' *conf.* 10,38, CCL 27,175: '*Et ecce intus eras et ego foris et ibi te quaerebam et in ista formosa, quae fecisti, deformis inruebam. Mecum eras, et tecum non eram.*'

[5] John Cavadini ('Time and Ascent in Confessions XI' in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, edited by Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), 174) has argued that Augustine's account of time in book 11 of the *Confessions* can be read as a critique of man's inclination to temporalize God and eternalize himself. On the one hand, Augustine critiques those who ask what God did before he created the world. This question subjects God to time and makes him into a creature. Simultaneously, Augustine critiques an idea of time according to which past, present, and future are regarded as having real existence. Man tends to represent past and future as existing 'somewhere', because he does not want to admit that his own being continuously tends to nothingness.

[6] *conf.* 13,13.

and the waters of the abyss symbolize the restlessness of the human will, which has attached itself to unstable goods.[7] Sin has made Adamic humanity into a dark and restless sea.[8]

Another image that Augustine uses to describe the penal consequence of (the first) sin is that of exile.[9] This image is inextricably connected to the parable of the prodigal son.[10] When Adam sinned, the heavenly Jerusalem remained standing by God's grace, but man left the house of the Father to journey to a far-off country (*terra longinqua*).[11] Since then, man misses the joys and comforts of the Father's house. Instead of being nourished by the Word of God, he suffers spiritual hunger (*egestas*).[12] Instead of being clothed with the divine light, he walks around naked and in darkness.[13]

The fall of humanity is the cosmic background against which Augustine's life unfolds.

THE YOUNG AUGUSTINE: LIFE IN THE FLESH AND GOD'S CHASTISEMENTS

The following sections describe how Augustine depicts himself in his youth. He was born under the curse of Adam. He suffered under the penal effects of Adam's sin. At the same time, however, he was familiarized with the Scriptures and the Church, the places where God recreates man into his image. Yet, because his mother deferred baptism, Augustine was delivered to his Adamic nature and to the waves of temptation in the world. Rather than being led back to God, he further alienated himself from God by following the inclinations of

[7] A helpful overview of Augustine's use of sea imagery in the *Confessions* is offered by Bernd Lorenz, 'Notizen zum Bild des Meeres in den Confessiones des Augustinus', in *Studia Patristica* 18/4, edited by F. L. Cross (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 85–9; Henri Rondet, 'Le Symbolisme de la mer chez saint Augustin', in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès international augustinien, Paris, 21–24 septembre,* vol. 2 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), 691–701.

[8] *conf.* 13,28, CCL 27,257: '*Si non esset lapsus Adam, non diffunderetur ex utero eius salsugo maris, genus humanum profunde curiosum et procellose tumidum et instabiliter fluuidum*.' Cf. *conf.* 13,20.

[9] *conf.* 12,13. Augustine describes himself and his friends before his conversion as 'banished from God's house' (2,4) 'walking along the streets of Babylon' (2,8).

[10] Leo Ferrari, 'The Theme of the Prodigal Son in Augustine's *Confessions*', *Recherches augustiniennes* 12 (1977), 105–18; Georg Nicolaus Knauer, 'Peregrinatio Animae. Zur Frage der Einheit der augustinischen Konfessionen', *Hermes* 85/2 (1957), 216–148. Knauer highlights the importance of Ps. 139 in combination with Luke 15:12–24 for the unity of the *Confessions*. He seeks the unity of the *Confessions* in the pilgrimage of the soul that leaves God, is chased by God, both in judgement and grace, and returns to God.

[11] Cf. *conf.* 1,28; 4,30; 7,16.

[12] *conf.* 13,9. For this image, see L. Ferrari, 'Symbols of Sinfulness in Book 2 of the *Confessions*', *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971), 93–104 (102ff.).

[13] *conf.* 13,9.

his fallen nature: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the ambition of the world. In hindsight, Augustine sees God at work in the evils that he suffered on account of his sinful behaviour. However, as he was dominated by the desires of the flesh, he lacked all receptiveness for God's accusing voice. Although his reading of the *Hortensius* awakened in him the struggle between flesh and spirit, the materialist and dualist misconstruction of this battle by Manichaeism impeded him from becoming receptive to the message of divine chastisement. Only his reading of the books of the Platonists, and the metaphysic he gained through them, would effect a change in this situation.

Augustine's Adamic Nature

Augustine begins the description of his childhood with the praise of God the Creator. God gave him being and form, the desire for self-preservation, an intelligent mind, a desire for truth, and a heart that sought human community.[14] Furthermore, God fulfilled Augustine's created desires by sustaining him with food via his nurses, by teaching him language so that he could understand other humans, and by surrounding him with a community of teachers and friends with whom he could learn and share the truth.[15] 'Indeed, all good things come from you, O God', and 'from my God is all my salvation'.[16] At the same time, however, Augustine confesses that he suffered under God's condemnation. He was born as a child of Adam. He suffered the penal consequences of Adam's sin in his own nature. He belonged to the 'salty sea from Adam's limbs—the human family, deeply inquisitive, inflated by tempests, restlessly fluid'.[17]

In the *Confessions*, Augustine for the first time elaborates how the consequences of the first sin can be discerned from the earliest moments of human life. Taking his point of departure in Job 14:4–5 (*nemo mundus a peccato coram te, nec infans, cuius est unius diei uita super terram*), Augustine states that human concupiscence is already present in little infants.[18] He argues that the eagerness of a baby's cry for its mother's breast hides an already-existing obsession with bodily self-preservation (*concupiscentia carnis*). And under the cries, tears, and limb movements by which infants express their desire for nourishment, already lurks a desire to subdue their parents to their own wills (*ambitio mundi*). Augustine even claims to have seen a baby that could not

[14] *conf.* 1,31. [15] *conf.* 1,7; 1,12. [16] *conf.* 1,7.

[17] *conf.* 13,28, CCL 27,257: '. . . *ex utero eius (Adam) salsugo maris, genus humanum profunde curiosum, et procellose tumidum et instabiliter fluuidum*.'

[18] Augustine often uses Job 14:4–5 to support his doctrine of original sin throughout the rest of his writings often with the variation '*sorde*' instead of '*peccato*'. See for example *pecc. mer.* 3,13; *ciu.* 20,26; *c. Iul. imp.* 2,3; *c. Iul. imp.* 4,49; *ep.* 166,6.

stand his brother sharing the milk of his mother's breast. He wanted to have his mother for himself alone. Augustine concedes that these evils are tolerated in children, because they are unable to understand their censurability. But this does not mean that the children themselves are innocent. 'The infant's limbs might be innocent, but not its mind,' Augustine argues.[19] The desires that will later move the child to transgress the law already prove to be present in it.

This does not mean that Augustine believes that God credits the movements of the infant's will to it as personal sins.[20] Rather, these movements must be understood as evidence of its solidarity with Adam.[21] Infants share responsibility for Adam's sin, and the present movements of their souls are the penal effects of this sin, which indeed disposes them to commit personal sins in the future. This seems to me the meaning of expressions such as *peccatum infantiae meae* and *conceptus in peccatis*.[22] It is the sin of Adam inherited by all and at work in all of us that Augustine confesses in the account of his infancy. Children do not only share in Adam's transgression, but also suffer its penal consequences in the soul, which are themselves the causes of new sins. As Augustine has it in *en. Ps.* 132,10: 'From Adam is Adam, and on top of Adam's sin many sins originate. Whoever is born, is born as Adam, a damned from a damned, and by living in an evil way he adds to Adam.'[23] In the subsequent narration of his own actions and those of his environment Augustine expresses how the penal consequences of the first sin engender new sins in him, Adam's child.

Missing Salvation: The Deferral of Baptism

That Augustine was born as a child of Adam, suffering under God's anger, is not the only thing he has to say about his infant identity. He was also introduced to the Christian faith from the earliest moment of his life on

[19] *conf.* 1,11, CCL 27,6: '*Ita imbecillitas membrorum infantilium innocens est, non animus infantium*.' He adds that the same thing that we bear with in a child, we condemn in an adult.

[20] Paul Rigby (*Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1987), 34) argues: 'Augustine does not distinguish between an evil act and guilt for that act, but between guilt and the infant's comprehension of that guilt. The fact that an infant cannot understand its guilt does not mean that the infant is innocent.' This does not mean, however, that an infant has personal sins. Augustine denies this, for example, in *Gn. litt.* 10,23; *pecc. mer.* 1,40,30. It seems to me that Augustine's denial of the infant's innocence refers to its solidarity in the sin of Adam, of which it now suffers the penal consequences.

[21] On our solidarity in the sin of Adam, see *conf.* 1,14; 5,16; 8,21–2.

[22] *conf.* 1,12, CCL 27,7: '*Quod si et in iniquitate conceptus sum et in peccatis mater mea me in utero aluit, ubi, oro te, deus meus, ubi, domine, ego, seruus tuus, ubi aut quando innocens fui*?' In this sentence, *peccatum* must be understood as a metonymy of the type '*causa pro effectu*'.

[23] *en. Ps.* 132,10, CCL 40,1933: '*Ex Adam Adam, et super Adam multa peccata nascuntur. Quisquis nascitur, Adam nascitur, damnatus de damnato, et addidit male uiuendo super Adam*' (quoted by A. Solignac in BA 13, 658).

earth. He tells his readers that he was signed with Christ's cross and seasoned with his salt from the moment he left his mother's womb.[24] He learned that God is great and powerful, and able to hear our prayers and come to our help, even though we do not see him.[25] Augustine also heard about the humility of Christ, who had descended to us because of our pride and promised us eternal life.[26] Despite the influence of his father who was still a pagan during Augustine's youth, the teachings of his mother and other Christians exerted great influence on him: he had started to pray to God, and when a sudden illness struck him, he asked for the baptism of Christ 'with fervour of mind' (*motu animi*) and 'with faith' (*fide*).[27] This is why Augustine can say of himself: 'So I already believed', and 'You were already my guardian.'[28]

However, Augustine's mother refrained from further introducing Augustine into the Church and its healing discipline by deferring his baptism. In line with a widespread custom, she deemed it better to reserve the medicine of baptism for a later moment in Augustine's life, so that it could wash away as many sins as possible.[29] Augustine deplores his mother's decision and asks God if this has been the cause for his relapse into the 'waters of sin'. Would it not have been better to be baptized and to have guarded his regained health under God's care?[30] It remains an enigma to Augustine why God allowed Monnica to defer his baptism and unleash the entire story of Augustine's fall. It reminds the reader of the enigma of the fall of Adam, with which the

[24] *conf.* 1,17. [25] *conf.* 1,14. [26] *conf.* 1,17. [27] *conf.* 1,17.
[28] *conf.* 1,17.

[29] The delay of baptism had become common in fourth-century Christianity, because of the belief that if one underwent baptism later, more sins could be washed away. In line with the tradition, baptism was seen as remitting past sins, and obliging the baptized to live a perfect life after baptism. There was only one possibility of penitence and forgiveness after baptism, namely in the case of *peccata mortalia*, such as adultery, murder, or idolatry. Monnica's deferral of baptism can therefore be seen as motivated by a desire for Augustine's salvation. Throughout the *Confessions*, Augustine seems to break with this view of baptism. In his view, the Christian life after baptism remains a struggle with sin. For this interpretation, see Michael Schramm, 'Taufe und Bekenntnis. Zur literarischen Form und Einheit von Augustinus' *Confessiones*', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 51 (2008), 82–96 (86–8). Augustine's doctrine of original sin as espoused in the *Confessions* announces the normativity of infant baptism, which he would defend against the Pelagians. On this matter, see D. F. Wright, 'Augustine and the Transformation of Baptism', in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, edited by Alan Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 287–310. On the catechumenate before and in Augustine's time, see William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995).

[30] *conf.* 1,18. For Augustine's understanding of ecclesial formation, see *conf.* 13,15ff. In book 1 of the *Confessions* Augustine opposes the authority of the pagan educational system to the formation programme of the Church (*conf.* 1,27). The former deforms the human person, while the latter reforms him in the image of God (*conf.* 13,18ff.). Augustine sees the postponement of his baptism as impeding his reformation and as keeping him unformed earth (*terra informis*). On the opposition between ecclesial and secular formation, see Napier, *En Route to the Confessions*, ch. 6.; Gerald P. Boersema, '"Exquisite and Precious Vessels": Doctrina in Book 1 of Augustine's Confessions', *Augustiniana* 61/3–4 (2011), 187–205.

Manichees confronted Augustine. He does not know why God allowed the fall to happen. He does believe, however, that God uses its penal consequences in his providence over humanity. And this is also what Augustine confesses with regard to his own life.

Although Augustine's adamic nature was allowed to receive free play over him, the authority of the Christian faith would always remain engraved in his mind. Augustine never explicitly turned his back on the religion of his youth. He was rather a wandering catechumen. I will argue, therefore, that the story of the *Confessions* unfolds between a baptism deferred and a baptism received.[31] The story of Augustine the sinner, and of God as the chastising Father, can be interpreted as one long disciplinary process, one long catechumenate, in which God acts as the one who restrains Augustine's sins, but also gradually instils in him a fear of God himself, which leads him to the conviction that he needs a mediator who takes away his guilt before God and thus liberates him from the dominion of sin over him. It is this mediator with whom Augustine is finally united through baptism.

Augustine Delivered to his Adamic Nature: Curiosity, Lust, and Pride

This section describes Augustine's alienation from God with the categories that Augustine himself uses to describe his life in sin: *concupiscentia carnis*, *concupiscentia oculorum*, and *ambitio mundi* (1 John 2:16).[32] These are created inclinations of human nature—the desire for self-preservation, knowledge, and human community—which sin has distorted into lust, curiosity, and pride.[33] Moreover, they mutually reinforce each other; they work together in a unified operation.[34] The following sections analyse how Augustine acted out this threefold concupiscence. Further, they will pay attention to its social mediation. Augustine depicts himself not just as an individual that abandoned

[31] Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth: Ritual and Conversion in Antiquity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 230; Michael Foley, 'The Sacramental Topography of the *Confessions*', *Antiphon* 9/1 (2005), 30–64 argues convincingly that the whole of the *Confessions* is structured around the high points of the liturgy, among which baptism takes a central place.

[32] For the importance of this text in Augustine's description of sin in the *Confessions*, see J. J. O'Donnell, *Confessions: Introduction, Text, Commentary*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 204; N. J. Torchia, 'St. Augustine's Triadic Interpretation of Iniquity in the *Confessions*', in *Augustine: Second Founder of the Faith*, edited by Joseph C. Schnaubelt and Frederick Van Fleteren (New York: Peter Lang, 1990),159–73.

[33] Napier (*En Route to the Confessions*, ch. 6) points out the Stoic background of Augustine's understanding of human nature as created with a threefold natural desire, the so-called *commendationes*.

[34] Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 52 speaks of the resemblences between Augustine's understanding of sin as a unitary operation of threefold concupiscence and his understanding of the Trinity. Sin is a perverse imitation of the triune God.

God, but as someone who, after the deferral of baptism, was gradually introduced into another community, the city that is ruled by the devil and his angels.

Concupiscentia oculorum

The distortion of the desire for temporal knowledge, *concupiscentia oculorum*, primarily revealed itself in Augustine's love of the theatre. Augustine depicts the theatres as an organized liturgy for demons. Gladiator fights and the stories of gods and heroes narrated or enacted there mediate a morality that conforms the minds and wills of the spectators to the mind and will of the devil.[35] Augustine contrasts this deforming knowledge to the reforming knowledge of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, mediated through the Scriptures and the liturgy of the Church.[36] He came to ignore the latter, while embracing the former.

Already as a young boy Augustine preferred the vain knowledge of the *spectacula* to the useful knowledge taught in grammar school.[37] During his literary education in Madaura, his curiosity found further nourishment. He was required to read the writings of Homer, Virgil, and Terrence, which made him 'drunk with the wine of error'. He enjoyed reading the stories, and delighted in sympathizing with their characters, but did not judge what he read in the light of God's revealed truth.[38] As a consequence, his curiosity induced in him the vice of lust. As an example of this, Augustine describes how he identified with the grief of Dido the adulteress,[39] and how he enjoyed the declamation of a poem about the adultery of Jupiter.[40] Curiosity did not only engender other vices. Augustine also used the vice of curiosity to cure the negative effects of his sins. By attending the theatre and witnessing the suffering of its actors, he consoled himself in his own sufferings. He used the suffering of others to scratch his own sores.[41] Thus he sought to heal the pain resulting from his sins, without having to repent of the sins themselves.

Concupiscentia carnis

The vice of lust is a distortion of the created inclination to self-preservation. Rather than using temporal creation according to the measure (*modus*) that God has ordained, it becomes the supreme object of enjoyment, in which man seeks to find his rest.[42]

[35] See *conf.* 3,5. Cf. 6,11–13 on the madness that the theatres could induce in the spectators.
[36] For the reforming drama of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, see *conf.* 4,19. Cf. also *s.* 301/A (*c.*400) where Augustine opposes the drama of the theatre to the drama of the liturgy.
[37] *conf.* 1,15. [38] *conf.* 1,26. [39] *conf.* 1,20–1. [40] *conf.* 1,26.
[41] *conf.* 3,4.
[42] *conf.* 4,15, CCL 27,48: '. . . *ipsa [anima mea] esse uult et requiescere amat in eis, quae amat.*'

We already observed the presence of this sin in Augustine as a baby. It developed in his youth and connected itself to the vice of pride. In the account of his boyhood, Augustine relates that he stole food from his parents, not just out of gluttony, but also in order to please his peers.[43] In his adolescence, lust became the defining theme of his life. Self-preservation became the driving motive in his interactions with other people, when he should have loved them as fellow creatures with whom he shared temporal and eternal goods. This attitude found its primary expression in Augustine's sexual licentiousness: he loved to love and to be loved, not according to the proper mode of friendship, but as a means to fulfil his desire for self-preservation in the enjoyment of other bodies.[44] This desire for sexual satisfaction moreover functioned within the economy of worldly ambition. Augustine felt that he must desire love, in order to stir the curiosity of his peers by his stories and to prove that his sexual achievements met their standards.[45]

The most profound description of the sin of lust is not found, however, in passages that deal with Augustine's sexual licentiousness, but rather in the endearing narrative of his relationship with an unnamed friend. Augustine describes the relationship between him and his friend as extremely close. They formed one soul in two bodies.[46] However, Augustine did not love his friend in God, so that their bond would receive stability in God's eternal being. Rather, he loved his friend in the way he should have loved God, namely as an eternally constant companion, as one who would never die.[47] When his friend indeed died, Augustine was so devastated that the whole world became death to him:

> Grief darkened my heart. Everything on which I set my gaze was death. My home town became a torture to me, my father's house a strange world of unhappiness; all that I had shared with him was without him transformed into a cruel torment. My eyes looked for him everywhere, and he was not there. I hated everything because they did not have him, nor could they now tell me 'look, he is on the way', as used to be the case when he was alive and absent from me. I had become a vast question to myself.[48]

[43] *conf.* 1,30.

[44] *conf.* 2,2, CCL 27,18: '*Et quid erat, quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari? Sed non tenebatur modus ab animo usque ad animum, quatenus est luminosus limes amicitiae, sed exhalabantur nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis et scatebra pubertatis et obnubilabant atque obfuscabant cor meum, ut non discerneretur serenitas dilectionis a caligine libidinis.*'

[45] *conf.* 2,7. [46] *conf.* 4,11.

[47] Augustine does not say this explicitly, but it can be inferred from the whole of his argument. Man is made to seek being and rest (*esse* and *requies—conf.* 4,15) outside of himself in God. The friend had replaced God, so that Augustine can be said to have sought immortality in his friend. This explains why Augustine was surprised that death did not also take him away when his friend had died (*conf.* 4,11).

[48] *conf.* 4,8, CCL 27,44–45: '*Quo dolore contenebratum est cor meum, et quidquid aspiciebam mors erat. et erat mihi patria supplicium et paterna domus mira infelicitas, et quidquid cum illo*

Reflecting on this experience, Augustine concludes he had loved his friend as if the latter could secure his very being. The friend had become the one in whom Augustine had sought to be and to rest. And when man seeks his being in things that are perishable, he must necessarily be torn asunder (*dilaniatur*) when the things he loves leave him.[49] According to Augustine, friendship can only be sustainable (and therefore truly enjoyable) when friends are bound together in God. God is the eternal being that stabilizes the bond of love between the two friends. This love preserves one from disordered grief over the loss of a friend.[50]

The above-mentioned reflection of Augustine also shows that lust deforms one's way of knowing the world. Because Augustine's friend had become the god of his universe, the whole world lost its goodness and attraction for him after his friend's death. The inordinate love for his friend disabled Augustine to know the world in its objective goodness. This shows the truth of what Augustine argues elsewhere, that when creation is worshipped instead of the Creator, man loses the ability to perceive the world in its own integrity.[51]

Ambitio mundi

Worldy ambition is the third vice that indwelled the young Augustine's heart. It is the distortion of the created inclination to obey God in community with others into the desire to exchange God's authority with self-rule and to impose this rule on others. In Augustine's youth this sin showed itself primarily in his disobedience to human authorities. He writes: 'O God, I sinned by going contrary to the precepts of my parents and my teachers.'[52] Although his parents and teachers could be blamed in many respects, he still regards them as legitimate authorities through whom God exercised his rule over

communicaueram, sine illo in cruciatum immanem uerterat. expectabant eum undique oculi mei, et non dabatur; et oderam omnia, quod non haberent eum, nec mihi iam dicere poterant: ecce ueniet, sicut cum uiueret, quando absens erat. Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio . . .' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions,* 57).

[49] *conf.* 4,15.

[50] This way of loving the neighbour has been critized by Philip Cary, 'Love and Tears: Augustine's Project of Loving without Losing', in *Confessions of Love: The Ambiguities of Greek Eros and Latin Caritas*, edited by Craig J. N. de Paulo et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 39–54, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Suffering Love', in *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, edited by T. V. Morris (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). According to these writers, Augustine condemns all grief over the loss of an earthly companion. Paul Helm ('Augustine's Griefs', *Faith and Philosophy* 20/4 (2003), 448–59) has argued, however, that Augustine does not condemn grief as long as it is felt for the right reasons, namely for the loss of the experience of Christian friendship. This is why Augustine does condemn the tears he shed for the death of his mother, as far as they were caused by the loss of his temporal connection to her. He does not condemn, however, his grief for her death as a fellow-believer, which temporarily deprived him of the possiblity of sharing with her the love of God.

[51] *c. Adim.* 12.

[52] *conf.* 1,16.

him. This is why Augustine says that when he disobeyed his parents and teachers—not in order to avoid doing evil, but to do his own will—he sinned against God and despised him in them.[53]

Augustine describes himself as involved in an ongoing rebellion against the rule that God imposed on his life. He disobeyed his teachers at secondary school in order to play games and celebrate his victories over others.[54] He rejected the precepts of Scripture with regard to sexuality, in order to follow his own rules.[55] He violated the law by stealing pears from an old man's garden, not in order to gain something good, but merely to enjoy evil: the bare freedom of disobeying the law and going unpunished.[56] Augustine wanted to be an 'overturner' (*euersor*) of God's order and to wallow in his self-rule.[57] The irony of this attempt, however, is that Augustine never attained absolute self-rule, both because of his creaturely limitations and because he remained bound to the norms mediated to him by his social environment. This irony becomes especially apparent from Augustine's career ambitions. His educators taught Augustine that rhetorical excellence, and the consequent reward of public honour, was the highest good to attain in life.[58] It is this imposed normativity that fuelled Augustine's desire to excel, and it defined his way of treating others.[59] Augustine did not really attain self-rule, but was rather ruled by an ideal imposed on him from without. Rather than ruling himself, he was ruled by the devil.

GOD'S DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE TO A DEAF AUGUSTINE

The previous section addressed the young Augustine's indulgence to the law of sin present in his members as a child of Adam. The following paragraphs address God's punishment of Augustine's sins. By punishing sin, God takes care that the sinner does not find satisfaction in sin, but instead suffers from

[53] *conf.* 2,7. [54] *conf.* 1,16.

[55] *conf.* 2,3–7. Augustine notes that although God's own voice sounded through the admonitions of his mother, his mother herself did not ask more of him than not to commit adultery with married women (thus risking a legal case). The fear of the punishment rather than the love of justice motivated her admonitions.

[56] *conf.* 2,14–16.

[57] *conf.* 3,6. In Carthage, Augustine depicts himself as sympathizing with a youth gang, called *eversores*, who went around the streets in search of fight and riot. For more historical details on this phenomenon, see Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 18–26.

[58] *conf.* 1,14.

[59] In his worldy ambition, Augustine uses his Manichaean friends to gain the position of court rhetor in Milan, and rather than trying to correct his rebellious pupils, he flees from them in order to save his own career perspectives.

the choice he has made and is thus confronted with its vanity. In the introduction to this book, we observed that this idea echoes the Neoplatonic notion of cosmic justice. Robert O'Connell has argued for the importance of this idea in Augustine's early works (especially for his refutation of the Manichees), and has shown that it belongs to the overarching themes of the *Confessions*.[60] The following quotation from the *Confessions* illustrates this idea:

> The unjust stumble over you and are justly chastised. Endeavouring to withdraw themselves from your gentleness, they stumble on your equity and fall into your anger. They evidently do not know that you are everywhere. No space circumscribes you. You alone are present even to those who have taken themselves far from you. Let them turn and seek you, for you have not abandoned your creation as they have deserted their Creator.[61]

Augustine places this Neoplatonic notion of cosmic justice in a theistic and creational framework. He believes that in his sufferings he is not so much confronted with an impersonal, necessary order, but rather with a personal God, who is involved in his life and is driven by loving intentions towards him. Moreover, Augustine seems to have broken with the optimistic idea that we are able to positively respond to our sufferings. Indeed, he did experience the divine admonition to return, but Augustine also emphasizes that he no longer possessed the ability to perceive this divine call and respond to it properly. Only because God had predestined him to be incorporated into Christ, in whom Augustine's soul would be liberated from the claim of sin, was he finally enabled to perceive his sufferings as divine chastisements and to properly respond to them, namely by confessing his sins. This affirms the conclusions of Chapter 4.

The following sections describe how Augustine related to God's chastising activity in his life before and while he was a Manichaean. Augustine describes himself as completely deaf to God's voice sounding through his sufferings. 'And I did not know it' (*et nesciebam*), he often comments. Only when Augustine gained his new Christian-Platonic metaphysics was he enabled to discern his sufferings as coming from the God who was chasing him as his wayward child.[62]

[60] R. J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of the Soul* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003[5]), 17; idem, 'Ennead VI, 4–5 in the Works of Saint Augustine', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 9 (1963), 1–39; idem, *Augustine's Early Theory of Man*, 155–83.

[61] *conf.* 5,2, CCL 27,58: '*. . . in te offenderent iniusti et iuste uexarentur, subtrahentes se lenitati tuae et offendentes in rectitudinem tuam et cadentes in asperitatem tuam. Videlicet nesciunt, quod ubique sis, quem nullus circumscribit locus, et solus es praesens etiam his, qui longe fiunt a te. conuertantur ergo et quaerant te, quia non, sicut ipsi deseruerunt creatorem suum, ita tu deseruisti creaturam tuam. ipsi conuertantur, et ecce ibi es in corde eorum, in corde confitentium tibi et proicientium se in te et plorantium in sinu tuo post uias. suas difficiles: et tu facilis terges lacrimas eorum, et magis plorant et gaudent in fletibus, quoniam tu, domine, non aliquis homo, caro et sanguis, sed tu, domine, qui fecisti, reficis et consolaris eos*.' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 72).

[62] *conf.* 10,38.

The Punishment of Curiosity

In book 1 of the *Confessions*, Augustine highlights how God used his educators to chastise him for his curiosity. In order to force Augustine to attend grammar school classes and to deter him from truancy, he was corporally punished by his teachers (*uapulabam*).[63] Although Augustine criticizes the motivations of his teachers, and concedes that true learning requires free curiosity (rather than coercion),[64] he approves of the restraint that his teachers exercised on him. If the flux of the child's own curiosity (*fluxus liberae curiositatis*) is given free play, the child will not acquire useful knowledge, but rather will deliver itself to pernicious delights (*iucunditas pestifera*).

Augustine's own behaviour confirmed this anthropological conviction. He committed truancy to attend the theatres and to let his ears be titillated by false stories.[65] God used the punishments of Augustine's educators to restrain this behaviour, and to call Augustine back to a good use of his desire for knowledge. In their beatings, Augustine believes, he was confronted with God's own discipline:

> The free-ranging flux of curiosity is channelled by discipline under your laws, God. By your laws we are disciplined, from the canes of the schoolmasters to the ordeals of martyrs. Your laws have the power to temper bitter experiences in a constructive way, recalling us to yourself from the pestilential life of easy comforts which have taken us away from you.[66]

This does not mean that Augustine justifies the behaviour of his educators as such. He rather criticizes them. He argues that they only restrained their pupils' sins, in order to foster these same sins. They punished their pupils for attending the theatres, in order to make them pursue a career that would enable them to organize theatre shows themselves.[67] Moreover, Augustine accuses his educators of hypocrisy. They flogged their pupils, because these preferred competitive games to the classroom, whereas they themselves played the same kind of games in their adult lives.[68]

[63] *conf.* 1,14. On the use of whipping in primary schools in Late Antiquity, see Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation*, 397–9. For a contextualized interpretation of Augustine's comparison of boyhood beatings and martyrdom, see Annemaré Kotzé, 'Lyfstraf en martlaarskap in Augustinus se *Confessiones* 1,9,14–15', *HTS Theological Studies* 64/4 (2008), 16–33.

[64] *conf.* 1,23, CCL 27,13: '*. . . maiorem habere uim ad discenda ista liberam curiositatem quam meticulosam necessitatem*.'

[65] *conf.* 1,23; 1,26.

[66] *conf.* 1,23, CCL 27,13: '*Sed illius fluxum haec restringit legibus tuis, deus, legibus tuis a magistrorum ferulis usque ad temptationes martyrum, ualentibus legibus tuis miscere salubres amaritudines reuocantes nos ad te a iucunditate pestifera, qua recessimus a te.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 17).

[67] *conf.* 1,23.

[68] *conf.* 1,15.

Nonetheless, Augustine speaks positively about God's use of the penalties he suffered.[69] 'But you, by whom "the hairs of our head are numbered" (Matt. 10:30), used the error of all who pressed me to learn to turn out to my advantage.'[70] By coercing Augustine to learn good things, namely to read and write, God gave him knowledge that would later prove to be useful in God's service.[71] By punishing Augustine's curiosity, God thus both restrained Augustine's misuse of his intelligence and prepared it for its future service to God.

At that time, however, Augustine did not discern God's presence in the scourging of his educators. It is Augustine's converted self who evaluates his boyhood sufferings as useful restraint and as preparation for his future life as a converted Christian and bishop. As a boy he could only imagine God as being opposed to his sufferings (rather than as rebuking him through them), because he did not see his own folly and his need for correction.[72] The fact that God did not grant his request for redemption might have even given him a sense of abandonment. In retrospect, though, he sees that God was in fact graciously present with him, precisely by allowing the chastisements of his educators.

Punishment of Lust

Especially in books 2 to 4 of the *Confessions*, Augustine describes how God punished him for his indulgence in carnal concupiscence. As a young student in Carthage he sought for love and affection, but did so outside of the bonds of marriage and fidelity. Augustine fell in love and his love was returned, but he simultaneously suffered God's chastisement for despising the bond of

[69] Leo Ferrari ('The Boyhood Beatings of Augustine', *Augustinian Studies* 3 (1974), 1–14) has suggested that Augustine's image of God as scourger and of himself as guilty creature is based upon his classroom experiences. He would have projected the relationship he had with his teachers onto God, as a 'similar' source of authority. I do not think that this psychological interpretation of Augustine's image of God does justice to the text. If Augustine's image of God were the product of his traumatic experiences in the classroom, one would expect either of the following options. Out of anger and self-pity, he would depict God as exclusively opposed to what his educators did to him. God would be the loving, affirming father. Or, out of loyalty with his educators, still fearing their rejection, he would not have the courage to imagine God as disapproving their actions, and would therefore identify God's action with theirs. But Augustine does neither of these two things. He condemns his teachers for their misuse of power (namely in the service of evil rather than righteousness—*conf.* 1,26) and for their hypocrisy (they punished him for playing games which they also played—*conf.* 1,15). Simultaneously, he confesses that God used their actions to restrain Augustine's curiosity. The image of God is thus neither based upon anger against, nor on loyalty to, his teachers. It rather seems that Augustine's image of God transformed his feelings about himself and about his teachers. This text testifies to the therapeutic value of Augustine's Christian faith.

[70] *conf.* 1,19, CCL 27,11: '*Tu uero, cui numerati sunt capilli nostri [Mt. 10,30], errore omnium, qui mihi instabant ut discerem, utebaris ad utilitatem meam.*' (Chadwick, *Confessions*, 15).

[71] *conf.* 1,24. [72] *conf.* 1,14.

marriage. The instability of the relationship, the possibility (or actuality) of losing his partner to another, made him suffer under all kinds of painful emotions.

> I rushed headlong into love, by which I was longing to be captured. 'My God, my mercy', in your goodness you mixed in much vinegar with that sweetness. My love was returned and in secret I attained the joy that enchains. I was glad to be in bondage, tied with troublesome chains, with the result that I was flogged with the red-hot iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger and contention.[73]

Augustine further reflects on God's punishment of his carnal concupiscence in the story about the death of his friend. Augustine loved this friend as if he could guarantee the continuity of Augustine's existence. By allowing this friend to die, God exposed Augustine to the idolatrous nature of his friendship and to his enmity against God. His disgust for life showed that he had loved his friend as if his friend were God. His hatred against death was in fact a hatred against God who deprived him of his friend. And his fear of death was a fear of the one who could ultimately deprive him of his imagined immortality; for if Augustine died, his friend would die completely, which would mean that Augustine would lose his own identity altogether.[74] Furthermore, the fact that only his tears could give him a sense of consolation proved that his friend still was the one who gave ultimate meaning to his life.[75] Through all of these emotions God confronted Augustine with the idolatrous nature of his friendship.

God thus confronted Augustine with his law, which taught him that true immortality can only be found when we transfer our love from temporal creation to the immortal God, 'where love is not deserted if it does not depart'.[76] However, as Augustine did not yet see that his sufferings should be interpreted as punishments for his own sins, he did not have a reason to convert.[77] He tried to cure his wound by fleeing from Thagaste to Carthage, so that he would not continuously be reminded of his friend. Time and new

[73] *conf.* 3,1 (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 35).

[74] *conf.* 4,11, CCL 27,45–6: '*Nam ego sensi animam meam et animam illius unam fuisse animam in duobus corporibus, et ideo mihi horrori erat uita, quia nolebam dimidius uiuere, et ideo forte mori metuebam, ne totus ille moreretur, quem multum amaueram.*'

[75] Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, *Les Larmes d'Augustin* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2011), 81: 'S'abondonner aux pleurs offre l'heureuse occasion de se repentir au souvenir des misérables jouissances d'hier. Les larmes alimentées par ce regret permettent de se laisser aller au dégoût et à la haine, ces passions si poussantes dans le cœur humain, au même titre que les passions contraires, le désire et l'amour.'

[76] *conf.* 4,18 and *conf.* 4,16, CCL 27,48.

[77] Augustine is already converted to Manichaeism when his friend dies (whom he had seduced to become a Manichee). As I will argue, Manichaeism prevented Augustine from understanding his sufferings as a punishment for his own sins. Furthermore, Augustine ironically remarks, Manichaeism deprived him of a God who could save him from his sufferings. When he said to his soul, 'hope in God', he was plunged back to himself, because the phantasm that he conceived of as God could not elevate him above himself (*conf.* 4,12).

contacts tempered his pain, but did not remove the causes for similar grief in the future.[78] He remained bound to temporal creation.

Punishment of the *Ambitio Mundi*

It seems that for a time Augustine's worldly ambition was not challenged at all. The first books of the *Confessions* highlight his success as a student and rhetor, especially with regard to his achievements in rhetorical competitions.[79] The blinding pride that resulted from his success even became one of the reasons why he rejected the Bible as the path to Wisdom (as it did not meet the standards of rhetorical sophistication) and embraced Manichaeism. This version of Christianity presented itself as the religion of the elite, in contrast to Catholic Christianity in North Africa. As such it sustained Augustine's elitist self-image.[80] However, Augustine does not relate any divine scourging with regard to his worldly ambition until the moment he decided to leave Africa for Milan, due to the unruliness of his pupils in Thagaste.

AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHICAL AWAKENING AND THE RESISTANCE OF THE FLESH

Hitherto I have described how Augustine as a boy and young man was delivered to his adamic nature, and suffered divine chastisement for his sins, but neither understood his sufferings, nor had the will to convert to God in response to them. He remained deaf to the divine plaintiff.

It was Augustine's reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* that effected the first change in this carnal way of life. This experience awakened him to the life of the spirit. Augustine expresses his reading experience as follows: 'The book changed my feelings and it changed my prayers towards you, Lord. It made my wishes and desires different. Suddenly every vain hope became worthless to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour of heart and I began to rise up in order to return to you.'[81] Augustine thus

[78] *conf.* 4,12–13. [79] *conf.* 4,1.

[80] Manichaeism presented itself as a religion for critical and educated people. As such it provided the young adolescent Augustine with a sense of self-esteem (*duab. an.* 11; *util. cred.* 1–2). In disputing with uneducated Catholics on the problem of evil, he considered himself a great teacher, elevated above the masses (*duab. an.* 10). But his success made him negligent of examining the truth of Manichaean teaching itself. He rather wanted it to be true, in order to uphold the basis of his elitism.

[81] *conf.* 3,7, CCL 27,30: '*Ille uero liber mutauit affectum meum et ad te ipsum, domine, mutauit preces meas et uota ac desideria mea fecit alia. Viluit mihi repente omnis uana spes et*

interprets his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* as a true experience of conversion. God himself changed his feelings and awoke a desire in him to return to his father's house, just like the prodigal son. Augustine's conscience was awakened to a transcendental reality that presented itself to him as normative in an absolute sense. He had to find this truth and subject himself to it. This discovery put Augustine's way of life in the flesh radically in doubt; it destabilized his inner self.[82]

In *Confessions* 10,33 Augustine identifies this philosophical desire with the Pauline struggle between the desire of the Spirit and the desire of the flesh.[83] When reading the *Hortensius*, Augustine was about to pass from the stage *ante legem* to the stage *sub lege*. However—as Augustine observes in *conf.* 10,33—when the spirit attempts to subject the flesh, the flesh fights back, and without grace man yields to its power. This is exactly what happened to Augustine after his first philosophical awakening. Cicero's admonition to search for a wisdom that surpasses all philosophical sects immediately reminded Augustine of the name of Christ. Therefore, he turned to the Bible. However, the Scriptures offended his literary taste. They lacked the elevated style of Cicero. It was his pride that held Augustine back from subjecting himself to the liberating discipline of Scripture. He deprived himself of the possibility to arrive *sub lege* and then *sub gratia* through the authority of Scripture. He explains that 'my swollen state fled its mode of teaching (*modus eius*) and my gaze never penetrated to the things that were to be found inside. She, however, was such that she grew with the little ones, but I refused to be a little one, and swollen with pride, I considered myself a grown up.'[84]

Augustine sees this pride as symptomatic of his spiritual state at this moment in his life. He desired beatitude and truth, but he himself wanted to determine where to find it. He did what is typical for the sinner: rather than subjecting his carnal desires to the truth, he subjected the truth to his carnal desires.[85] As a penal consequence of this indulgence to the flesh, Augustine fell into Manichaeism.[86] It was Manichaeaism that would hold him back from

immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili et surgere coeperam, ut ad te redirem.' Cf. Luke 15:20: '*surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum, et dicam ei: pater, peccavi in caelum, et coram te … (20) et surgens venit ad patrem suum*.'

[82] Goulven Madec, *Petites Études augustiniennes*, 93. [83] *conf.* 10,33.

[84] *conf.* 3,5, CCL 27,31: '*Tumor enim meus refugiebat modum eius et acies mea non penetrabat interiora eius. Uerum autem illa erat, quae cresceret cum paruulis, sed ego dedignabar esse paruulus et turgidus fastu mihi grandis uidebar*.' Note how Augustine describes his way of approaching the Scriptures, '*uidere quales essent*'. He approached the Scriptures with the method of a proud rhetorician, rather than with the attitude of a humble exegete (Fischer and Mayer, *Die Confessiones*, 146).

[85] *conf.* 10,34.

[86] Cf. *mor.* 1,32, CSEL 90,37: '*… et ego latraui et canis fui, quando mecum iure non docendi cibo sed refellendi fustibus agebatur* (I too barked and was a dog; and then, as was right, instead of the food of teaching, I got the rot of correction)'. In retrospect, Augustine sees his fall into

discovering himself in the light of God's transcendence. Only through his reading of the books of the Platonists, did he gain the knowledge of God's transendence and was enabled to evaluate his own life in light of it. In other words, through his reading of the books of the Platonists, Augustine passed to the stage *sub lege.* His return to the Scriptures, in particular to Paul, then opened for him the way towards a life under grace.

The following sections describe first how Manichaeism impeded Augustine from perceiving himself *sub lege*, because of its materialist understanding of God and the soul, and its 'victimization' of the sinner. Second, I will illustrate how Augustine sees his adherence to Manichaeism has having obstructed his search for transcendence. Third, I will show how Augustine gradually abandoned Manichaeism, regaining confidence in finding the truth in orthodox Christianity, but still continued to combine the search for truth with a life in the flesh, because he lacked a vision of the truth that fully convinced him. Fourth, I will describe how Augustine experienced God's punishments of his threefold concupiscence during this period. God continued to put him to unrest about his present life, but because the truth had not yet appeared to him, he remained in a state of suspense.

Manichaeism: A Materialist Understanding of the Battle between Flesh and Spirit

Besides its critique of the Bible[87] and its promise of a rational religion, Manichaeism attracted Augustine, because it offered him an explanation of the nature of evil.[88] Augustine's philosophical awakening had opened his eyes

Manichaeism as a corrective punishment for his 'barking' against the Christian Scriptures, his unwillingness to receive *disciplina* from Wisdom itself. Wisdom, however, refuses to give what is holy to dogs (Matt. 7:7). Augustine makes the point that Scripture cannot be understood if the reader lacks the love of God, which entails obedience to his authority.

[87] See *conf.* 3,12–13.

[88] In this section, I limit myself to Augustine's critique of Manichaeism. The influence that Manichaeism itself exerted on Augustine and how the *Confessions* reflect this influence is the object of a relatively young field of research. Important publications include: Erich Feldmann, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius und des Manichäismus auf das Denken des jungen Augustinus von 373* (Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Theology, Münster University, 1975); J. van Oort, *Augustinus' Confessiones: gnostische en christelijke spiritualiteit in een diepzinnig document* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); J. van Oort, 'Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism: The Case of "Confessions" III 6,10 and its Implications', in *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World*, edited by Pieter W. Van der Horst (Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 1995), 57–68; J. van Oort, 'God, Memory and Beauty: A Manichaean Analysis of Augustine's Confessions, Book X', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 69/1 (2013), 1–8; Annemaré Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions: Communicative Purpose and Audience* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004); Annemaré Kotzé, 'Confessiones 13: Augustinus, die Manicheërs en die skeppingsverhaal', *Augustiniana Neerlandica: aspecten van Augustinus' spiritualiteit en haar doorwerking*, edited by Paul van Geest and Johannes van Oort (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 149–61; Annemaré Kotzé, 'The

to the battle between flesh and spirit within himself and his need for redemption. He sought this redemption in Christianity, but because he had been disappointed by Catholic Christianity in Africa, especially in her Bible, he turned to Manichaean Christianity in his quest for answers. Augustine saw the Manichees as offering him an understanding of the battle between flesh and spirit and a way of dealing with it that both enabled him to continue his present way of life and simultaneously receive a sense of liberation.

In his reflections on Manichaeism in the *Confessions*, Augustine first blames the Manichees for their materialist understanding of God and the soul. He argues that God and the soul have a spiritual nature. God is an unchangeable, incorruptible, and incorporeal being, elevated above space and time. The human soul is made to contemplate God by ascending from corporeal reality to the incorporeal reality of God. The soul sins when it ceases to make this upward movement towards God and turns to itself and the sensible world, in order to find the truth there. This movement away from God towards the world of the senses makes the soul carnal.

Augustine also criticizes the Manichees for having taught him to understand God and the soul in corporeal terms. They taught that God can be compared to the substance of light, and that a part of him is spread out through material creation.[89] Augustine's critique of this understanding of God is that it immerses the soul even deeper into the life of the senses, rather than helping it to ascend from material to spiritual reality. As Augustine himself comments: 'Not according to the intelligence of the mind, by which you willed me to surpass the beasts, but according to the sense of the flesh I sought you.'[90] Rather than liberating the mind from its carnality, Manichaeism affirms the carnality of the mind.[91] The Manichees promised Augustine the light of truth, but made him gradually descend to the darkness of the underworld.[92]

Furthermore, Augustine argues that Manichaeism denies the entire concept of moral responsibility, due to its identification of God and the soul and its understanding of evil as a physical substance. For the Manichees, the soul is a part of God that at present suffers under the dominion of an external principle that has entrapped it in matter. According to Augustine this makes

"Anti-Manichaean Passage" in Confessions 3 and its "Manichaean Audience"', *Vigiliae Christianae* 62/2 (2008), 187–200; Jason BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, vol. 2, 314–402.

[89] *conf.* 3,10.

[90] *conf.* 3,11, CCL 33: '… *non secundum intellectum mentis, quo me praestare uoluisti beluis, sed secundum sensum carnis quaererem*.' Cf. Madec, 'Dieu dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Petites Études augustiniennes*, 77–80.

[91] For Augustine, this is a matter of high ethical relevance. In his view, this materialist understanding of reality wipes out the ontological difference between rational and non-rational creatures. This could lead to the situation that a Manichaean denied fruit to a hungry man, because the latter's consumption of it would encapsulate the divine particles of light in an unclean body (*conf.* 3,18).

[92] *conf.* 3,11.

it impossible to evaluate human action from a moral perspective.[93] In Manichaeism, the carnal movements of the human soul do not result from the soul's voluntary aversion from God towards creation, but are to be attributed to a contrary nature that has entrapped a part of God in matter. As Augustine has it:

> It seemed to me not us who sin, but I do not know what other nature that sins in us, and I liked it that my pride was without blame, and when I did something wrong, not to confess to you, so that you could heal my soul, that sinned against you. But I loved to excuse myself and to accuse something else that I do not know, which was with me and yet not I … My execrable iniquity preferred that in me you, almighty God, were defeated to my destruction, rather than that I was defeated by you unto salvation.[94]

In other words, not only does Manichaeism's image of God fix the soul in its obsession with the senses, but its ontological dualism also denies man's responsibility for this obsession.

Augustine contends that this understanding of God, the soul, and evil influences Manichaean soteriology. As a Manichaean, Augustine understood Christ as an extension of the divine light that had appeared in the world of matter to remind the soul of its origin in the kingdom of light.[95] In response to this divine call, the soul had to separate itself from the world of matter. The salvation brought by Christ is thus not understood as a renewal of the mind in its relation to the world, but as a separation of a good and an evil substance. For the Manichaean elect, this implied a rigorous life of abstention. For Augustine the auditor, however, it primarily involved participation in the rituals of liberation executed by the elect. As such, Manichaean soteriology perfectly matched with Augustine's desire for salvation from evil, without actually having to change his way of life. By participating in the Manichaean liturgy, he received a sense of contact with the divine and a hope of liberation. Augustine expresses this soteriological dualism in book 4 as follows:

[93] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 200 summarizes Augustine on this issue as follows: 'The ethics of naturalism are always at bottom Manichaean. The existence of evil is admitted, but only as an external fact of nature: moral evil is not more than a "physical" phenomenon … Responsibility and accountability are empty terms, for they do not mean that a man ought to "answer" for his actions, ought to "render account" of them.' BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma 2*, 108 calls for caution, however, in taking Augustine's ethical conclusions from Manichaean dualism as adequately representing Manichaean doctrine.

[94] *conf.* 5,18, CCL 27,67: '*… mihi uidebatur non esse nos, qui peccamus, sed nescio quam aliam in nobis peccar naturam et delectabat superbiam meam extra culpam esse et, cum aliquid mali fecissem, non confiteri me fecisse, ut sanares animam meam, quoniam peccabat tibi, sed excusare me amabam et accusare nescio quid aliud, quod mecum esset et ego non essem … execrabilis iniquitas, te, deus omnipotens, te in me ad pernicieam meam, quam me a te ad salutem malle superari.*'

[95] See *conf.* 5,20 on the docetic view of Christ that Augustine held in this period.

> We were seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving through various cupidities, publicly in teaching of the arts which they call liberal; privately through a falsely so called religion—in the former role arrogant, in the latter superstitious, in everything vain. In the one we pursued the empty glory of popularity . . . in the other we sought to purge ourselves of that filth (the filth of pursuing the empty glory of popularity) by bringing food to those who were called the Elect and Holy, from which they manufactured for us angels and gods in the workshop of their stomach, through whom we could be liberated.[96]

Augustine enjoyed an illusion of purgation, without really being purged of what made him miserable, because Manichaeism misconstrued the battle between flesh and spirit as a battle between two material substances within Augustine: the part of God and the contrary nature.[97]

Failed Ascent: Pride Keeps Augustine Bound to the Flesh

Augustine illustrates how Manichaeism held him bound to the senses by relating his attempt to ascend from corporeal to spiritual reality. He tried to undertake this ascent when he reflected on the topic of beauty and fittingness. His thoughts on this matter he published in a lost book called *De pulchro et apto*. He relates, however, that his ascent failed, because his Manichaean materialism hindered him from imagining anything incorporeal. Although the power of truth rushed into his eyes (*inruebat in oculos ipsa uis ueri*), he turned his mind away to lines and colours and physical magnitudes. And because he was unable to perceive the immaterial ideas present in corporeal things, he also lacked the ability to perceive the incorporeal nature of his own soul.[98]

[96] *conf.* 4,1, CCL 27,40: '. . . *seducebamur et seducebamus, falsi atque fallentes in uariis cupiditatibus, palam per doctrinas, quas liberales uocant, occulte autem falso nomine religionis, hic superbi, ibi supersitiosi, ubique uani, hac popularis gloriae sectantes inanitatem . . . illac autem purgari nos ab istis sordibus expetentes, cum eis qui appellarentur electi et sancti, afferemus escas, de quibus nobis in officina aqualiciuli sui fabricarent angelos et deos, per quos liberaremur*.'

[97] During his time as a Manichaean, Augustine also believed in astrology and consulted astrologers (although his adherence to them gradually faded, until he finally abandons astrology in book 7). Pagan astrology taught that the universe was determined by the movements of the stars. This determinism gave reason to deny personal responsibility, and thus gave further support to Augustine's Manichaean idea that he was the victim of external forces, rather than a responsible agent before a transcendent God. At the same time, astrology's suggestion that our knowledge of the movement of the stars enables us to predict the future might have given a sense of control to Augustine the Manichaean, who believed that evil is an external and uncontrollable force. For this observation, see Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 28. For Augustine's criticism of astrology, see L. de Vreese, *Augustinus en de astrologie* (Maastricht: Veltman, 1933); B. Bruning, 'De l'astrologie à la grâce', *Augustiniana* 41/1–4 (1991), 575–643; Thomas O'Loughlin, 'The Development of Augustine the Bishop's Critique of Astrology', *Augustinian Studies* 30/1 (1999), 83–103.

[98] *conf.* 4,24, CCL 27,52: '*Et inruebat in oculos ipsa uis ueri et auertebam palpitantem mentem ab incorporea re ad liniamenta et colores et tumentes magnitudines et, quia non poteram ea uidere in animo, putabam me non posse uidere animum*.'

Augustine connected this materialism to the dualism between God and matter. Virtue he attributed to a substance called the Monad and evil to a substance called Dyad, Pythagorean terms for the two opposing substances in Manichaeism. He associated God and the soul with the Monad. This Monad is at work in acts that we experience as coming from the rational mind. Whenever we behave 'irrationally' he believed this Monad was repressed by the evil counter-substance, the Dyad.[99]Augustine identified himself with the former, and dissociated himself from the latter.

Augustine argues that his ascent failed because he attributed his inability to see immaterial reality to a counter-substance, and refused to take responsibility for it himself. If he had known God as being itself, his soul as created by him, and his obsession with the senses as resulting from his own sins, this could have led him to confession and renewal. The proud identification of his own soul with God, however, impeded him from doing so. This pride was punished with a fixation of the mind in its carnality. The flesh drew the mind back towards carnal images—or, which is the same, it suffered God's punishment within itself.

> I tried to approach you, but you pushed me away so that I should know death, for you resist the proud. What could be worse arrogance than the amazing madness with which I asserted myself to be by nature what you are? I was changeable and this was evident to be from the fact that I wanted to be wise and to pass from worse to better. Yet I preferred to think you mutable rather than hold that I was not what you are. That is why I was pushed away, and why you resisted my inflated pride, and I imagined corporeal forms, I being flesh accused flesh… [I lent the ears of my heart], o sweet truth, to hear your interior melody, when I was meditating on the beautiful and the fitting, and I desired to stand still and to hear you and to rejoice with joy at the voice of the bridegroom, but I could not (*et non poteram*), because I was snatched away by the sounds of my error and the weight of my pride plunged me into the deep. For you did not give my ears joy and gladness, nor did my bones exult (Ps. 51:10), because I had not yet been humbled.[100]

[99] *conf.* 4,24, CCL 27,52. Augustine also distinguishes virtue and vice as expressions of peace vs discord and unity vs division (*et cum in uirtute pacem amarem, in uitiositate autem odissem discordiam, in illa unitatem, in ista quandam diuisionem notabam, inque illa unitate mens rationalis et natura ueritatis ac summi boni mihi esse uidebatur, in ista uero diuisione inrationalis uitae nescio quam substantiam et naturam summi mali*).

[100] *conf.* 4,26–7, CCL 27,53–4: '*Sed ego conabar ad te et repellebar abs te, ut saperem mortem, quoniam superbis resistis [Iac. 4,6; 1 Pt. 5,5]. Quid autem superbius, quam ut adsererem mira dementia me id esse naturaliter, quod tu es? cum enim ego essem mutabilis et eo mihi manifestum esset, quod utique ideo sapiens esse cupiebam, ut ex deteriore melior fierem, malebam tamen etiam te opinari mutabilem quam me non hoc esse, quod tu es. Itaque repellebar, et resistebas uentosae ceruici meae et imaginabar formas corporeas et caro carnem accusabam… dulcis ueritas, in interiorem melodiam tuam, cogitans de pulchro et apto et stare cupiens et audire te et gaudio gaudere propter uocem sponsi [Io 3,29], et non poteram, quia uocibus erroris mei rapiebar foras et pondere superbiae meae in ima decidebam. non enim dabas*

In response to this experience, Augustine turned to the *Categories* of Aristotle to find deeper insight into the nature of things, but this did not change his understanding of God and the soul. He applied Aristotle's categories to God's being and produced a figment—again the penal result of his corporeal thinking. 'You had commanded and it so came about in me, that the soil would bring forth thorns and brambles for me, and that with toil I should gain my bread'[101] (Gen. 3:18). Then, Augustine started to read books on the liberal arts, but neither did the reading of these books liberate him from his bondage to corporeal creation. 'I enjoyed reading them, though I did not know the source of what was true and certain in them. I had my back to the light and my face towards the things that are illuminated. So my face by which I was enabled to see the things lit up, was not itself illuminated.'[102] And so, Augustine's pride brought his search for truth to an impasse, because he did not know God as the light of his mind. Although Augustine would abandon Manichaeism, he would keep struggling with his intellectual materialism until he encountered the books of the Platonists.[103]

AUGUSTINE'S GRADUAL RETURN TO CHRISTIANITY AND HIS STATE OF SUSPENSE

In book 5 Augustine narrates the beginnings of his liberation from Manichaeism. The study of the liberal arts, already mentioned at the end of book 4, had led him to question the Manichaean understanding of the cosmos. Further study of pagan philosophers made these questions even more pressing.[104] But Augustine had heard of the great authority of Faustus of Milev and hoped to pose his questions to him in order to receive satisfying answers. Faustus, however, whom Augustine describes as more eloquent than learned, could not answer Augustine's questions. This experience affirmed Augustine's doubts about Manichaean cosmology and formed the decisive step towards his abandonment of the sect. 'In consequence, the enthusiasm I had for the

auditui meo gaudium et laetitiam, aut exultabant ossa [Ps. 50,10], quae humiliata non erant' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 68).

[101] *conf.* 4,29, CCL 27,55: '*Iusseras enim, et ita fiebat in me, ut terra spinas et tribulos [Gn. 3,18] pareret mihi et cum labore peruenirem ad panem meum*.' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 70).

[102] *conf.* 4,30, CCL 27,55: '*Et gaudebam in eis et nesciebam, unde esset quidquid ibi uerum et certum esset. Dorsum enim habebam ad lumen, ad ea, quae inluminantur, faciem: unde ipsa facies mea, qua inluminata cernebam, non inluminabatur*.' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 70).

[103] *conf.* 7,1.

[104] *conf.* 5,3.

writings of Mani was diminished, and I felt even greater despair of learning from their other teachers after having consulted on the many points which disturbed me the man who was particularly distinguished.'[105]

However, although the philosophers whom Augustine studied helped him to leave the Manichees, they did not lead him to the knowledge of God the Creator either. Although he lost confidence in Manichaeism as the way to the truth, he still held to a materialistic understanding of reality, and to a substantialist view of evil.[106]

His encounter with Ambrose in Milan changed this situation, however. Augustine explicitly contrasts Ambrose with Faustus.[107] Whereas the latter had become a snare of the devil to all who listened to him, Ambrose taught the doctrine of salvation. His authority began to convince Augustine from the very outset. Although Augustine pretended to be merely interested in Ambrose's rhetorical skills, along with the bishop's words their content also entered into his heart, albeit gradually.[108] Ambrose's preaching increasingly convicted Augustine of the defensibility of Catholic Christianity against the Manichees, but it did not persuade him of the truth of Christianity.

At a certain moment, he decided to leave the Manichees and to assume a sceptical position.[109] Yet, he did not apply his scepticism in an absolute way, because he still believed that the truth he was searching for could only be found in Christ. Therefore, he did not entrust the healing of his soul to the Academics, but followed the inner voice of his parents and enrolled as a catechumen in the Catholic Church, 'until something certain would show itself, by which I could direct my course'.[110] Under the preaching of Ambrose, Christianity became more and more credible to Augustine. What held him back from final assent, however, was his fear of believing falsehood. His disillusionment with Manichaeism was still fresh, and this made him anxious about entrusting himself to another authority.[111]

The preaching of Ambrose partially conquered the compelling force of scepticism. Although Augustine was reluctant to embrace the Christian faith

[105] *conf.* 5,13, CCL 27,63: '*Refracto itaque studio, quod intenderam in Manichaei litteras, magisque desperans de ceteris eorum doctoribus, quando in multis, quae me mouebant, ita ille nominatus apparuit.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 79).

[106] *conf.* 5,18–19.

[107] *conf.* 5,23. T. Fuhrer, 'Confessiones 6: "Zwischen Glauben und Gewissheit"', in *Die Confessionen des Augustinus von Hippo: Einführung und Interpretationen zu den 13 Büchern*, edited by N. Fischer and C. Mayer (Freiburg—Basel—Vienna: Herder, 2004),, 243, footnote 4.

[108] *conf.* 5,23–24, CCL 27,71: '*. . . longe est a peccatoribus salus [Ps. 118,155], qualis ego tunc aderamet tamen propinquabam sensim et nesciens . . . et dum cor aperirem ad excipiendum, quam diserte diceret, pariter intrabat et quam uere diceret, gradatim quidem.*'

[109] As he found it intellectually unfaithful to remain a member of a sect to which he preferred certain philosophers.

[110] *conf.* 5,25, CCL 27,72: '*. . . donec aliquid certi eluceret, quo cursum dirigerem.*'

[111] *conf.* 6,6.

altogether, he came to prefer it to Manichaeism (*praeponens*), because it was more modest in its pretensions. It commanded faith in things that could not be demonstrated, rather than promising rational insight and ending up with the demand to believe incredible things. Moreover, Augustine became persuaded that belief in authority as such is not irrational. On the contrary, he argues, unless we believe anything that is told to us, we cannot do anything in this life.[112] Indeed, most of our basic convictions are based upon belief in what others have told us to be true. This acceptance of authority led Augustine to accept Scripture as divine revelation. The reasoning that led him to this belief was as follows: he believed that God exists and cares for humanity (providence), that humanity lacks the rational power to find the truth on its own, and he observed that Scripture had been accepted among almost all nations. None of the philosophers he had read offered rational arguments that forced him to reject these beliefs (although they differed on the question of providence).[113] On this basis, Augustine concluded that his belief in the authority of Scripture was philosophically acceptable.[114]

This did not mean, however, that he was already fully released from scepticism. His faith still had the character of rational assent.[115] He needed the personal encounter with the transcendent God to prompt him to seek God through the Scriptures. Augustine's faith needed a form of sight, in order to wholeheartedly subject himself to the authority of Scripture, which he had rationally accepted. As we will see, when he received his encounter with God through his reading of the books of the Platonists, he immediately turned to the Scriptures. His metaphysical discovery as it were formed the hermeneutical key that opened the Scriptures to him as the means through which the God whom he had contemplated for a time offered him the way to salvation.

Until that moment, however, he remained in a state of suspense, because he had not yet encountered a truth that captured his heart and persuaded him of his need to abandon his present way of life. This does not mean that Augustine regards his scepticism about the truth as rendering him inculpable. After all,

[112] *conf.* 6,7.

[113] For the discussion among different philosophical schools, see Fuhrer, 'Zwischen Glauben und Gewissheit', 252–3. Fuhrer argues that Augustine assumes a Stoic position on divine providence at this point. This might have been the case, as Augustine also seems to hold a Stoic view of the divine nature during this period. However, the text itself indicates that Augustine's belief in divine providence was not so much *derived* from a philosophical school, but rather not decisively contradicted by any of them (*conf.* 6,7).

[114] *conf.* 6,8. What convinced Augustine even further of Scripture's authority was its general accessibility (*sermo humilis*) combined with a deep profundity. Scripture invites everyone into its bosom, and promises those who let themselves be exercised by its words to reveal deeper mysteries.

[115] Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 78-79.

he sees his adoption of scepticism as a penal consequence of his own sins. Had he not left God in Adam, the truth would never have been uncertain to him. Augustine therefore attributes his state of suspense to his own unwillingness to find the truth in the place where it was. 'With all my love for the happy life I feared that life at the place where it was, and while I fled it, I kept seeking it.'[116] Rather than bowing to the truth itself, and confessing the wickedness of his life in the flesh, he tried to combine his threefold concupiscence with the search for truth and happiness. In other words, he continued in the course he had taken after his reading of Cicero.

GOD'S DISCIPLINARY PUNISHMENTS OF AUGUSTINE THE SEEKER OF TRUTH

Meanwhile, God continued to discipline Augustine through corrective punishments. Although he had been awakened to the life of the spirit after his reading of Cicero, he kept combining his search for 'the immortality of wisdom' with his indulgence to the flesh. He searched for wisdom, but fled from it at the place were it was to be found. In books 5 and 6, in which Augustine relates the time between his abandonment of Manichaeism and his discovery of the books of the Platonists, he describes several disciplinary measures by which God confronted him with the vanity of this attempt to combine the search for truth with the indulgence to his threefold concupiscence (curiosity, lust, and pride).

His reading of pagan philosophers of nature, for example, confronted him with the untruth of Manichaean cosmology to which his unbridled curiosity had led him. About this experience Augustine confesses to God: '[You were] putting my shameful errors before my face so that I would see and hate them.'[117] Augustine's encounter with a drunken beggar in Milan was used by God to confront him with the vanity of his worldly ambition. He came to see that he was using all his intellectual and rhetorical power to achieve a temporal felicity that this beggar already possessed. Moreover, the beggar's

[116] *conf.* 6,20.

[117] *conf.* 5,11 CCL 27,62: '*Inhonestos errores meos iam conuertebas ante faciem [Ps. 49,21] meam, ut uiderem et odissem*.' Augustine alludes to Psalm 50:21. In this psalm, God gathers his people to have a lawsuit with them, because of their idolatry. Although they take God's name in their mouths and observe religious rituals, their behaviour betrays them as despisers of God's commandments. This is what Augustine had done as a Manichaean. He had taken the name of God in his mouth, but his religion was empty of true obedience.

felicity had a much purer moral basis than the one Augustine and his friends strove for with their mendacious speeches. This experience made Augustine increasingly aware of the fact that his worldly ambition rather impeded than advanced the discovery of the happy life.[118] 'You broke my bones with the rod of your discipline', he writes in retrospect.[119] In Milan, Augustine was also confronted with the impossibility of combining his carnal concupiscence with the search for wisdom and happiness. Alypius tried to convince Augustine that he needed to abandon his marriage plan for the sake of seeking wisdom in a philosophical community of friends. Augustine, however, could not imagine a life without the delights of sexual lust, and therefore defended a form of seeking the truth that could be combined with marriage.[120] However, when his friends' wives turned out to disagree with their spouses' resolutions, the entire plan collapsed and Augustine and his friends turned back to their worldly affairs. Meanwhile, Augustine's concubine was snatched away from his side, and Augustine tried to temper the pain of this loss with new sexual relationships.[121] In all of these experiences God taught Augustine that the truth only reveals itself to its chaste lovers, but resists those who want to possess it together with something else.[122]

Through these corrective punishments, God confronted Augustine with the fact that the compromise between flesh and spirit leads to nothing. However, because Augustine was still entangled in his materialist way of thinking, he lacked the resources to truly identify his problem. In order to attain the waters of baptism, he needed to see himself as a creature made to contemplate God, but fallen because of his own sins, and standing in need of grace to bridge the gap. Although Augustine, by this time, had left behind the Manichaean view of God as a corruptible substance, and of evil as a counterforce of which man is merely a victim, he had not yet gained a new vision of God, the world, and his own place within it that enabled him to correctly diagnose the nature of his unhappiness. His mind remained enslaved to his corporeal imagination.[123] His reading of the books of the Platonists would effect a change in this situation. By these books God would bring Augustine under the law.

[118] *conf.* 6,10, CCL 27,80: '*Et inueniebam male mihi esse et dolebam et conduplicabam ipsum male, et si quid adrisisset prosperum, taedebat apprehendere, quia paene priusquam teneretur auolabat.*'

[119] *conf.* 6,9, CCL 27,80: '*Propterea et tu baculo disciplinae tuae confringebas ossa mea.*'

[120] In *conf.* 6,22 Augustine states he sought marriage exclusively to satisfy his *concupiscentia*, rather than to become an honourable husband and a father of children.

[121] *conf.* 6,25. [122] *conf.* 10,66.

[123] *conf.* 7,2. Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 376 identifies Augustine's understanding of God right before his reading of the Platonists as Stoic. I think that Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 77–78 offers a less probable suggestion when he says that Augustine held a view of God that resembled the Epicurean understanding of atoms as the underlying source of all reality. Augustine's belief in divine providence was denied by the Epicureans, but affirmed by the Stoics, albeit in a pantheist manner.

BEING BROUGHT UNDER THE LAW: THE EFFECT OF READING THE PLATONISTS

Augustine's Discovery of the Creator and his Creation

During his stay in Milan, Augustine encountered the books of the Platonists, mediated to him through a man 'swollen with pride'.[124] Augustine interprets this encounter not as an isolated event, but rather as standing in the service of his return to Christianity. God used these books in order to reveal to him a particular truth of Christianity, namely the transcendence of God and the spiritual nature of the soul. By reading these books, he received an overwhelming experience of what it means that God is his Creator and he God's creature, who has fallen away from God through sin. Although the way in which Augustine came to this knowledge is comparable to the Plotinian ascent of the soul,[125] the function Augustine ascribes to this ascent differs from its function in Plotinus. As has been argued by several scholars, Augustine does not understand this ascent as aimed at the salvation of the soul, as in Plotinian Neoplatonism,[126] so that his falling back would testify to the failure of the ascent.[127] The passage in which Augustine relates his experience of contemplation is not about salvation, but about the revelation of the relationship between God, the soul, and the rest of creation.[128] It is about how Augustine

[124] *conf.* 7,13. This might have been Flavius Manlius Theodorus, to whom Augustine dedicated *De beata vita*.

[125] Goulven Madec, *Lectures augustiniennes* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2001), 133. As a converted Christian Augustine continued using this method of ascent as a kind of meditation on the future life. Cf. *conf.* 10,65; 11,2.

[126] John Peter Kenney has pointed out that Plotinian contemplation identified knowledge of transcendence with salvation itself. Through contemplation, the Plotinian philosopher discovered the unfallen part of his soul and thus gained the confidence to purge himself of the exigencies of temporal, bodily existence. Later Neoplatonists rejected the idea that the soul was partly unfallen, and took recourse to theurgical rituals to mediate between the One and the fallen soul. See the observations in John Peter Kenney, 'Saint Augustine and the Limits of Contemplation', in *Studia Patristica* 38, edited by M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 201–4 and John Peter Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism: A Study in Ancient Platonic Theology* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 91–149 (on Plotinus).

The question as to which Platonic books Augustine read has been extensively discussed, and remains unresolved. His critique, however, seems primarily directed against Porphyry, because this pupil of Plotinus reserved a place for theurgy, the invocation of non-corporeal divinities, in the process of the soul's purgation. This is what Augustine has in mind when he identifies the Platonists with the idol worshippers whom Paul mentions in Rom. 1:23–5. Plotinus explicitly rejected idolworship (see O'Donnell, *Confessions*, II, 430). Cf. Madec, '"Platonisme et Christianisme"', 131; J. J.O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St. Augustine* (London: Longman, 1980), 123–55.

[127] Cf. Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1950), 157–68 who famously referred to Augustine's ascents as 'vaines tentatives d'ectases plotiniennes'.

[128] Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 293; Madec, '"Platonisme et Christianisme"', 132–4; John Peter Kenney, 'Augustine and the Limits of Contemplation', 199–218.

came to know himself as a fallen creature in the light of God's creatorship and his righteous judgement. In this passage, Augustine is made man *sub lege*, who comes to delight in the law of God, but feels that he has been sold under the law of sin and is unable to redeem himself from this burden.

Augustine describes his vision of God in *Confessions* 7,16–23. I take this passage as one description of the same reading event, in which Augustine, by God's help (*duce te*),[129] was elevated through the observation of creation, into the soul, up towards a momentary vision of God. In that event he saw an unchangeable light (*lux incommutabilis*) above the eye of his soul (*super eundem oculum animae meae*). Augustine emphasizes that the nature of this light was not derived from anything known to him through the senses. It was not merely above his mind, as particular created realities transcend other created realities because of their differing natures.[130] This light, Augustine confesses, was completely different (*ualde, ualde aliud ab istis omnibus*), because it had made him (*superior quia fecit me*). He himself was lower because he was made by this light (*ego inferior quia factus ab ea*). This light inflamed him with a desire to hold its vision. He immediately knew that his soul was made to contemplate God for all eternity.

From this experience of God as transcendent Creator, Augustine looked down on material creation and saw that everything derives its being from God and is therefore good. Yet, created things are not the highest good. This is manifest from the fact that they can be corrupted. Their being can become less. Furthermore, one must distinguish within the realm of creation between a higher and a lower level. For example, the earth is lower than the heavens. It is characterized by things that harm each other's being (*non conueniunt*). In comparison with the harmony of the heavens, the realm of the earth is lower and less good.[131] Nonetheless, all the things together are very good. 'And for you evil does not exist at all, not only for you, but neither for your entire creation, because outside of you there is nothing that rushes in and corrupts the order that you imposed on her.'[132] From the highest heavens to the worm—all together they form the choir of creation that sings God's praises (Ps. 148:1).

Thus, Augustine discovered God as the Creator of everything, the soul as the spiritual substance in us that is made by God and designed to contemplate

[129] *conf.* 7,16.

[130] Augustine uses the examples of oil that floats on water and the heavens as placed above the sky.

[131] This observation might have an anti-Manichaean background. The Manichees regarded the heavenly bodies as the receptacles of the divine particles of light which were liberated from their inprisonment in the sublunar material world. Augustine defends a hierarchical monism against this dualist opposition between heavenly bodies and the sublunar world.

[132] *conf.* 7,19, CCL 27,105: '*Et tibi omnino non est malum, non solum tibi sed nec uniuersae creaturae tuae, quia extra te non est aliquid, quod inrumpat et corrumpat ordinem, quem imposuisti ei.*'

God, and the material creation as good in its own way of being. Augustine regards these insights concerning the relationship between God and the world as having provided him with the presuppositions that he needed to acquire a new understanding of the nature of evil. He began to see that evil cannot be a substance, as Manichaeism claimed, because God created everything good.

Augustine's Discovery of the Nature of Evil: Sin and its Punishment

If there is nothing evil in God's creation, why then do humans experience evil in this world? Augustine's response to this question is that we have come to experience creation as evil as a result of the soul's turning away from God towards lower things.[133] It is sin that makes us experience creation as evil. How is this to be explained?

As we have seen in the preceding pages of the *Confessions*, the soul that seeks its life outside of itself in the realm of space and time comes to suffer from this choice. It experiences creation as 'evil', because creation does not fulfil its desires. However, as the soul cannot believe that its suffering should be understood as a divine punishment for its own sins, it invents another substance as the source of evil. This, Augustine argues, explains the origin of his adherence to Manichaeism.[134] He did not want to convert from his own sins, nor did he acknowledge God's anger against his sins, and therefore adopted the view that evil is a substance, external to himself but inherent to this world, under whose dominion the soul suffers. Now Augustine sees, however, that his own entanglement in concupiscence, and the suffering that resulted from it, does not come from an evil substance, but should be understood as the penal effect of his own sin.

This discovery determined Augustine's interpretation of being 'knocked down' upon his experience of contemplation. He tells his readers that, during his ascent to God, he could not hold his soul's eye directed towards the divine light that he saw. He now knew, however, how this was to be explained. As a Manichaean he had attributed the failure of ascent to the influence of an evil substance, but he now realized that this failure was due to the fact that his soul bore the penal marks of its own iniquity, its veneration of the sensible world instead of God. Augustine's failure to hold on to the vision of God made him aware of his self-inflicted fallenness.

[133] *conf.* 7,22.

[134] Erich Feldmann, 'Et Inde Rediens Fecerat Sibi Deum (Conf. 7,20). Beobachtungen zur Genese des Augustinischen Gottesbegriffes und zu dessen Funktion in den *Confessiones*', in *Augustiniana* 41/1–4 (1990) [=*Collectanea Augustiniana. Mélanges offertes à T. J. van Bavel*, edited by B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, and J. van Houtem], 881–904 (892).

> And you beat back the infirmity of my sight, shining vehemently on me .... And I found myself to be far away from you in the land of unlikeness, as if I heard your voice from above: 'I am the food of the strong men; grow and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh, into you, but you shall be changed into me.' And I learned that you have corrected man for his iniquity and have made my soul shrink like the web of a spider (Ps. 38:12) ....[135]
>
> I was astonished to find that already I loved you, not a phantom instead of you. But I was not stable in the enjoyment of my God. I was caught up to you by your beauty and quickly torn away from you by my weight and rushed into those things with groaning; and my weight was my carnal habit.[136] But with me there was a memory of you, and I did not in any way doubt that the one to whom I should attach myself was (*esse*), but that I who should attach myself (to him) was not yet (*nondum esse*), because the decaying body weighs down the soul and the earthly habitation drags down the mind that has many thoughts.[137]

Augustine had discovered God as his Creator and the nature of evil as the soul's sin and its punishment. These insights made him conclude that it was his own iniquity that hindered him from holding on to the vision of God. As a consequence of its own iniquity, the soul has lessened in being, and has become unable to be nourished by God. Its mental sight is no longer accommodated to the object it longs to know and love.[138]

Augustine sees this discovery as setting the stage for his return. He discovered God as the absolutely desirable transcendent Creator, and himself as the one who had alienated himself from God by his own sins. This knowledge nullified all of Augustine's previous excuses for conversion. Knowing the truth now, Augustine could no longer exculpate himself for not clinging to it. He had become man under the law: he had received the knowledge of what he should desire, and of the self-inflicted nature of his inability to fulfil this

[135] *conf.* 7,16, CCL 27, 104: '*Et reuerberasti infirmitatem aspectus mei radians in me uehementer, et contremui amore et horrore: et inueni longe me esse a te in regione dissimilitudinis, tamquam audirem uocem tuam de excelso: cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me. nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me. et cognoui, quoniam pro iniquitate erudisti hominem et tabescere fecisti sicut araneam animam [Ps. 38,12] meam ...*'

[136] Chadwick translates *consuetudo carnalis* into English as 'sexual habit', but the word has a much broader meaning. It refers to the punishment of the mind that seeks God in the sensible world (cf. *conf.* 7,23, CCL 27,103: '*abduxit cogitationem a consuetudine*').

[137] *conf.* 7,23, CCL 27,107: '*Et mirabar, quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma, et non stabam frui deo meo, sed rapiebar ad te decore tuo moxque diripiebar abs te pondere meo et ruebam in ista cum gemitu; et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis. Sed mecum erat memoria tui, neque ullo modo dubitabam esse, cui cohaererem, sed nondum me esse, qui cohaererem, quoniam corpus, quod corrumpitur, aggrauat animam et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem [Sap. 9,15]*.'

[138] In this passage, elements from the parable of the prodigal son return: Augustine discovers that he is in a land of unlikeness (*regio dissimilitudinis*), suffers hunger (implied by God calling Augustine to feed upon him), and hears God shouting from afar (*de longinquo*). Augustine has now clearly perceived the divine call that he heard for the first time when reading the *Hortensius*, but suppressed by turning to the Manichees. Cf. Knauer, 'Peregrinatio', 229.

obligation. This is exactly the purpose for which God made Augustine read the Platonists: to see the state of his soul in the light of God's holiness, so that he would be filled with the fear of God's judgement and the need for conversion.

The Deficit of the Books of the Platonists

The previous section illustrated what Augustine learned from the Platonists. But he also criticizes them. Platonic monotheism had been right in several respects. It had seen God and his creative Word or Wisdom. It had confessed that the soul is not itself the light, but has to be enlightened by the Word. It had held that the Word is consubstantial to the Father. And finally, it believed that souls are renewed by participation in the Word. These are the major truths of Platonism, which helped Augustine to regain the right vision of God the Creator, and of himself as a creature, made to be enlightened by God.[139] Augustine criticizes the Platonists, however, because of their pride (*praesumptio*). This pride shows itself in the refusal to accept the incarnation of the Word and to admit that the soul has impaired itself from being united with God.

According to Neoplatonist thinking, the incarnation of the Word would entail a violation of the hierarchy of being. Lower things participate in higher things and can become better by a higher degree of participation. The Neoplatonists could understand this upward participation. This explains why they could only imagine the salvation of man as a matter of working oneself upwards. The divine is unmovable, and does not actively reach out to bring man upwards. Its omnipresence indeed admonishes man to return, but it does not heal his fractured nature to enable him to obey this call. Although from the perspective of Christianity, the Neoplatonists can be regarded as having understood the truth of creation, from their own perspective they had not. A creational ontology allows the Word to become flesh, because there is no opposition between the Creator and his creation; in Neoplatonism, however, this is unimaginable: the unchangeable cannot assume a changeable nature.[140]

Nonetheless, Augustine argues, the Platonists had to acknowledge their lack of power to reconcile themselves to the divine (although they boasted in their 'knowledge'). Just like the rest of humanity, they suffered under the dominion

[139] *conf.* 7,14. Cf. Kenny, 'Saint Augustine and the Limits of Contemplation', 205.

[140] Contrary to what has been argued by some scholars (such as Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 77), Augustine does see the Platonists as having grasped the truth of creation. This has rightly been noticed by Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 84-89. However, this does not mean that they themselves *knew* that they had understood the truth of creation. On the contrary, their disbelief in the Incarnation is partly to be explained from the fact that their metaphysics did not allow participation of the higher in the lower. A creational ontology does allow this.

of sin and the devil. They refused, however, to confess their sins. Instead, they tried to purge themselves through bodiless mediators. They communicated with demons through idol worship, and thus tried to pave a way upwards for themselves towards the divine realm. But because these demons did not solve the problem of sin itself, as they themselves invented sin, the Platonists remained in their power, under the curse of the law.[141] Augustine's critique of the Platonists seems primarily directed against Porphyry, whom Augustine would later criticize in *De ciuitate Dei* for his rejection of Christ and for his justification of theurgy.[142] While Plotinus thought that the soul could accomplish its own ascent through the discovery of its unfallen part, Porphyry argued for the need of mediators. But rather than seeking mediation through the incarnate Word, he rejected Christ and sought his way upward through the invocation of heavenly spirits. This is what Augustine refers to when he identifies the Platonists in the *Confessions* with the idol worshippers of Rom. 1:22–3.[143]

The core problem of Neoplatonist soteriology, as Augustine sees it, is not only its unwillingness to accept the God-sent mediator Christ; rather, it espoused a completely different idea of mediation. Rather than acknowledging that man's sin, his voluntary disobedience to God, is the root-problem that should be solved by a redeemer, it shifts the problem to the effects of sin, particularly to the soul's entanglement in the mortal body.[144] Augustine argues that once the Neoplatonists had done this, they could easily be deluded by the devil and his spirits. The devil presented himself to them as free from death, because he does not have a body. This made him look like a genuine redeemer. However, this is only presumption, Augustine argues. As the devil is a sinner himself, he must suffer the wages of sin, which is death (*stipendium peccati*

[141] *conf.* 10,67. On this passage, see also Karl Heinz Ruhstorfer, '"Der Mittler zwischen Gott und Mensch". Die Christologie im 10. Buch der Confessiones', in *Selbsterkenntnis und Gottsuche. Confessiones, Buch 10*, edited by Karl Heinz Ruhstorfer und Dieter Hattrup (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2007), 117–35.

[142] For Augustine's anti-Porphyrian polemic in *ciu.*, see Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 415–500.

[143] *conf.* 7,15, CCL 27,102: '*Et ideo legebam ibi etiam immutatam gloriam incorruptionis tuae in idola et uaria simulacra, in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis et uolucrum et quadrupedum et serpentium [Rm 1,23], uidelicet Aegyptium cibum . . .*' The place that Porphyry reserves for theurgical practices is limited. According to him, it only helped the purgation of the lower, irrational part of the soul. In order to purge the entire soul of man, he deemed the path of ascesis and dialectics indispensible. By thus combining Neoplatonic soteriology with popular religion, Porphyry sought a universal way of liberation over against Christianity. His pupil Iamblichus attributed a more extensive function to theurgy for the purgation of the soul. For the function of theurgy in the philosophy of Porphyry, see Pjotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, 'Porphyry and Theurgy: The Neoplatonic Background to Religious Practice', *Journal of Neoplatonic Studies* 9/2 (2004), 219–142.

[144] Cf. Porphyry's dictum '*omne corpus fugiendum est*', which Augustine himself approximated in *sol.* 1,24 ('*omnia sensibilia fugienda*') and retracts in *retr.* 1,4. For a critique of this dictum in Augustine's own works *s.* 241,7; *ciu.* 10,29; 12,20; 13,16–18; 22,26.

mors est).[145] Therefore, he is unable to redeem humanity from death. The Platonists fail in their search for a genuine redeemer, as they do not acknowledge the root-problem of human existence.

REDISCOVERING CHRISTIANITY THROUGH PAUL

This section shows what Augustine's turn to Paul meant for him. As I observed before, Augustine does not see his philosophical quest in the *Confessions* as a goal in itself. It stood in the service of recovering his 'lost' Christian faith. Philosophical schools did not satisfy him if they lacked the name of Christ. Moreover, Ambrose helped him to recover the Bible and to accept its authority. It is not surprising, then, that when Augustine received certainty about God through his readings in the books of the Platonists, he immediately returned to the Bible.[146] It is especially Paul who captured his imagination, the apostle with whom he had become acquainted during his time with the Manichees. Would his newly acquired metaphysic help him to understand this apostle afresh?

In Paul, Augustine discovered all true things that he also learned from the Platonists, but now with the recommendation of God's grace.[147] This short remark about the difference between Paul and the Platonists is often read as if Paul only added Christ to the Platonic story. It seems to me, however, that Augustine discovered two things in Paul that the Platonists ignored: the grace of Christ, but also the irresolvable nature of inner division (the battle between flesh and spirit). I will first treat Augustine's discovery of man's inner division, and then address his discovery of the Incarnation of the Word.

The Reality of Inner Division

According to Augustine, Paul taught that the intellectual ability to see God's eternal power and divinity through creation (Rom. 1:20), and the vision of God itself were God's gracious gifts.[148] These gifts were given to the Platonists. They had received the intellectual capacities to see God's invisible things and had been granted the vision of his divinity. However, rather than thanking

[145] *conf.* 10,67. Augustine refers to Rom. 6:23.

[146] Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 20–34.

[147] *conf.* 7,27, CCL 27,110: '*Et coepi et inueni, quidquid illac uerum legeram, hac cum commendatione gratiae tuae dici.*'

[148] *conf.* 7,27, CCL 27,110: '*Et coepi et inueni, quidquid illac uerum legeram, hac cum commendatione gratiae tuae dici, ut qui uidet non sic glorietur, quasi non acceperit [1 Cor. 4,7] non solum id quod uidet, sed etiam ut uideat - quid enim habet quod non accepit? [1 Cor. 4,7].*'

God for their knowledge, and humbling themselves because it convinced them of their fallenness, they started to boast in their knowledge.[149] They had been so proud about the sight that God had granted to them that they collapsed their sight into salvation,[150] as if the fact that they could not hold on to this sight did not prove that their souls were burdened by the consequences of their sins. Augustine sees the Platonists, just like the Manichees, as identifying their real selves with the 'knower', and dissociating themselves from the 'sinner'. This judgement still applies in the case of Platonists who conceded that they needed the help of spirits to purge themselves. Exactly because they did not want to confess their iniquity, but were at the same time unable to purge themselves from its effects, they started to invoke spirits that could help them overcome these effects, without the need for confession.[151]

What Augustine discovered in Paul is that he took seriously the reality of sin, and the experience of inner division.[152] Paul teaches that the 'natural' knowledge of God does not give a person any reason for boasting. It rather compels him to confess his sins and their power over him. After all, the person who has received the gift of sight and knows to whom he should be united, nonetheless cannot fulfil his obligation, but falls back towards himself. In Augustine's view, Paul does justice to the unsolvable nature of this inner division. Paul argues that the man who delights in the law of God and the man who is taken captive by the law of sin present in his members are one and the same person. He does not solve this inner tension by reducing a person's true identity to that of the 'knower'. The one who knows God's law and delights in it is the same person as the sinner who disabled himself to act in accordance with the law:

> Even though man delights in the law of God according to the inner man, what will he do (*faciet*), because of the other law in his members that fights against the law of his mind, leading him captive to the law of sin, which is in his members? For you are just, Lord; but we have sinned, we have acted injustly, we have behaved impiously and your hand weighs us down, and justly we have been delivered to the old sinner, the ruler of death, who persuaded us to conform our will to his will, through which he did not stand in your truth.[153]

[149] *conf.* 10,67. [150] Kenny, 'Augustine and the Limits of Contemplation', 204.

[151] Kenny ('Augustine and the Limits of Contemplation', 203–4) argues that Augustine in the *Confessions* primarily attacks the Plotinian school that sought unity with the divine by rediscovering the unfallen part of the soul as being one's higher self. This might be the hidden agenda of his descriptions of ascent (which Kenney insightfully analyses), but when he attacks the Platonists explicitly, he seems to have in mind the school of Porphyry who denied the existence of an unfallen part of the soul, and therefore appealed to evil spirits for redemption.

[152] *conf.* 7,27.

[153] *conf.* 7,27, CCL 27,111: '*. . . etsi condelectur homo legi dei secundum interiorem hominem [Rm. 7,22], quid faciet de alia lege in membris suis repugnante legi mentis suae et se captiuum ducente in lege peccati, quae est in membris [Rm. 7,23] eius? quoniam iustus es, domine [Tb. 3,2; Ps. 118,137]; nos autem peccauimus, inique fecimus [3 Rg. 8,47], impie gessimus, et grauata est*

Augustine sees Paul as affirming the experience he had after reading the books of the Platonists; he delighted in God's transcendence and knew that he had to be united to this God in order to attain happiness, but he suffered under the penal consequences of his own sins, and did not have the power to solve this inner division himself.

Augustine's Approach to the Work of Christ

Augustine also discovered in Paul the divine response to the impasse in which man finds himself: the grace of Christ. The Word, who granted some humans sight of his divinity, has assumed a body not only to admonish (*admonere*) all to see, but also to heal them in order that they can hold fast *(tenere*) to what is to be seen, even those who were not able to see God from afar.[154]

As a Manichaean, Augustine held a docetic Christology. After his reading of the books of the Platonists he seems to have understood the person of Christ from an adoptionist perspective, in accordance with the Platonic idea that the lower can participate in the higher, but not vice versa.[155] Augustine arrived, however, at an orthodox Christology that confesses that the Word itself has assumed flesh and dwelled among us: the utter violation of Platonic ontology.[156] The divine Word, consubstantial with the Father, assumed a human body and a human soul in order to mediate righteousness and life to humanity.

How does Augustine understand the work of Christ in the *Confessions*? In the *Confessions* two approaches to the work of Christ that we encountered in the previous chapters come together. Augustine presents the work of Christ on the one hand as a sharing of humanity's punishment and as mediation of

super nos manus tua [Ps. 31,4], et iuste traditi sumus antiquo peccatori, praeposito mortis, quia persuasit uoluntati nostrae similitudinem uoluntatis suae, qua in ueritate tua non stetit [Io. 8,44].'

[154] *conf.* 7,27. In this context, Augustine observes that some are not even able to see God from afar (*de longinquo uidere non potest*). He probably refers to those not philosophically schooled. Christ, however, has become the way along which they go (*uenire*), see (*uidere*), and hold (*tenere*). The philosophers might surpass these people in that they have seen God from afar, but as they have refused to seek the way towards him through the mediator, they miss out on what the simple but humble believers will attain.

[155] Ortiz, *You Made us for Yourself*, 108-09.

[156] Madec ('Platonisme et Christianisme', 134) argues that it was probably the Milanese priest Simplicianus who showed Augustine the similarities and the differences between the teachings of the Platonists and the prologue to the Gospel of John. That Augustine arrived at an orthodox understanding of the Incarnation before his conversion has convincingly been argued by William Mallard, 'The Incarnation in Augustine's Conversion', *Recherches augustiniennes* 15 (1980), 80–98. The claim remains contested, however, as Brian Dobell's book on Augustine's conversion shows (Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)).

righteousness, and on the other hand as the pedagogy of the soul. Both of these approaches will be elaborated in the following sections.

Juridical Christology: Christ the mediator of righteousness

The juridical approach to Christology is connected to Augustine's understanding of the human predicament. We observed that Augustine diagnoses the distance between God and man as caused by human sin. Humanity voluntarily abandoned God in Adam, conforming its will to that of the devil, and each person adds to this primordial aversion by living out his threefold concupiscence. According to his righteous judgement, God delivered man to the movement of his own will, so that there is no possibility of turning back. Man is delivered to the dominion of sin, death, and devil and heads to final condemnation. Christ becomes the mediator between God and humanity by sharing their penal condition, and by mediating his righteousness to them. Thus, Christ changed man's juridical position before God: in Christ man's guilt is removed and on that basis the penalty of sin—the dominion of death, devil, and *consuetudo*—has been made void. Augustine expresses this idea in the following texts:

> Who will deliver him from the body of this death, unless your grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have brought forth coeternally with you and created in the beginning of your ways, in whom the ruler of this world did not find anything worthy of death, and he has killed him: and the handwriting that was against us has been made void.[157]
>
> He is the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He appeared among mortal sinners as the immortal one, mortal like humanity, righteous like God. Because the wages of righteousness are life and peace, being united with God by his righteousness he made void the death of justified sinners, a death which it was his will to share in common with them.[158]

This does not mean that the *poena peccati* is already removed in this life. It has rather been made void. It has lost its binding power. Although the law of sin is still at work in Christians, and still leads them into temptation and sin, these sins can no longer be held against them, as they share in Christ's

[157] *conf.* 7,27, CCL 27,110–11: '*. . . quis eum liberabit de corpore mortis huius nisi gratia tua per Iesum Christum dominum nostrum [Rm. 7,24sq.], quem genuisti coaeternum et creasti in principio uiarum [Prv. 8,22] tuarum, in quo princeps huius mundi [Io. 14,30] non inuenit quidquam morte dignum, et occidit eum: et euacuatum est chirographum, quod erat contrarium nobis [Col. 2,14]*?'

[158] *conf.* 10,68, CCL 27,192: '*. . . mediator ille dei et hominum, homo Christus Iesus [1 Tm. 2,5], inter mortales peccatores et immortalem iustum apparuit, mortalis cum hominibus, iustus cum deo, ut, quoniam stipendium iustitiae uita et pax est, per iustitiam coniunctam deo euacuaret mortem iustificatorum impiorum, quam cum illis uoluit habere communem*.'

righteousness. Augustine expresses this idea eloquently in book 9 of the *Confessions*, when he reflects upon the life of his deceased mother. He observes that his mother undoubtedly sinned after she was baptized. He prays God to forgive the sins that she committed after baptism and expresses the confidence that God has granted him his request, on account of the

> holy sacrifice, through whom the handwriting that was against us was blotted out, through whom the enemy was triumphed over, who held our sins against us and sought reasons to accuse us, and he found nothing in him, through whom we conquer. Who returns to him his innocent blood? Who pays back the price, with which he bought us, so that we were released from the enemy? Your maid-servant tied her soul to the sacrament of this our price through the bond of faith. No one plucks her from your protection.[159]

This juridical understanding of the work of Christ is both anti-Platonist and anti-Manichaean. As we observed before, Augustine regards both of these groups as unwilling to confess their guilt before God. They both disconnect the human predicament from its root-cause, namely man's rebellion against God—and this influences their soteriology. Manichaean soteriology circles around the liberation of light substance from its entrapment in the body. Platonist soteriology, particularly in its Porphyrian guise, focuses on the purgation of the soul from the stains of its existence in the body through the invocation of bodiless spirits. Although Augustine might have felt sympathy for this Neoplatonic ideal at the time of writing the *Confessions* (he still has a rather disembodied understanding of the heavenly life), he rejects their soteriology, as it denies that humanity needs to be released from its guilt before God in order to be liberated from sin's penal consequences.

Pedagogical Christology: Christ the milk for infants

In the *Confessions* Augustine connects this Christology to the pedagogical Christology which was more prominent in his early works. The connection between these two approaches become clear from the following quotation:

> And our life itself descended to us and bore our death and killed it through the abundance of its life and he thundered, shouting aloud that we should return to him in that secret place, from where he came to us, first in that womb of the virgin, where he married human nature to himself, mortal flesh, which would not be for ever mortal; and from thence as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber

[159] *conf.* 9,36, CCL 27,153: '*. . . uictimam sanctam, qua deletum est chirographum, quod erat contrarium nobis [Col. 2,14], qua triumphatus est hostis computans delicta nostra et quaerens quid obiciat, et nihil inueniens in illo, in quo uincimus. quis ei refundet innocentem sanguinem? Quis ei restituet pretium, quo nos emit, ut nos auferat ei? Ad cuius pretii nostri sacramentum ligauit ancilla tua animam suam uinculo fidei. nemo a protectione tua dirumpat eam.*'

> he jumped up as giant to run his course. For he did not delay, but ran crying out loud by his words, deeds, death, life, descent, and ascent – calling us to return to him. And he went away from our eyes, so that we would return to our heart and find him.[160]

This quotation says that Christ married human nature to himself and conquered its death through his life: righteousness conquers sin and its punishment. Simultaneously, Augustine describes Christ's life as an admonition of the Word that has appeared externally to our eyes to make us return to his secret presence in our heart. This was the reason of his ascension, that we would not cling to him in the flesh, but would ascend to him as the eternal Word who teaches us inwardly. Augustine does not leave behind his pedagogical Christology, but incorporates it into his juridical understanding of the work of Christ. Christ not only grants those who believe in him a new juridical position, but also presents himself as the humble teacher who has assumed a human nature in order to help sense-bound souls to ascend to the transcendental reality of his divinity. As such, Christ fulfils the aspirations of Platonic philosophy, not just for the few, but for everyone. Whereas the few received a flash of divine transcendence by God's grace, Christ has descended to grant to everyone a sustainable vision of God, if one is humble enough to confess one's own inability to ascend, and to bow before the Word who has become flesh.[161] In this regard, Paul's distinction between milk and food (1 Cor. 3:2–3) plays an important role. Christ the Word mingled the food that Augustine was unable to eat with the flesh, in order to become milk for his infant state.[162]

EFFECTING CONVERSION

Augustine's reading of the Platonists and Paul informed him about his own state under the law and about his need for the grace of Christ. However, this knowledge did not immediately effect Augustine's conversion. It had to be

[160] *conf.* 4,19, CCL 27,50: '*Et descendit huc ipsa uita nostra et tulit mortem nostram et occidit eam de abundantia uitae suae et tonuit clamans, ut redeamus hinc ad eum in illud secretum, unde processit ad nos in ipsum primum uirginalem uterum, ubi ei nupsit humana creatura, caro mortalis, ne semper mortalis; et inde uelut sponsus procedens de thalamo suo exultauit ut gigans ad currendam uiam [Ps. 18,6]. Non enim tardauit, sed cucurrit clamans dictis, factis, morte, uita, descensu, ascensu, clamans, ut redeamus ad eum. Et discessit ab oculis, ut redeamus ad cor [Is. 46,8] et inueniamus eum*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 64, adapted).

[161] See *conf.* 4,19; 7,24.

[162] *conf.* 7,24. On Christ as 'milk for infants' see T. J. van Bavel, 'Le Christ comme lac parvulorum et comme via dans la spiritualité de saint Augustin', *Augustiniana* 7 (1957), 254–81.

applied to his personal life.[163] He had to be convinced of what the vision of divine transcendence demanded of him personally, namely to abandon his political ambitions and the desire for marriage. God used two conversion stories, related to Augustine by Simplicianus and Ponticianus, to convince him of these demands.

Simultaneously with the delight in God's law, however, Augustine was confronted with the inner division of his will. He ardently desired to make himself free for God, but at the same time he felt the drawing force of habit, which held him back from actually making a decision. The captivity of his will to carnal habit, of which the ascent of book 7 had made him aware, presented itself again, obstructing his efforts to order his temporal life according to the demands of God's law. This inner division led Augustine into an impasse. He had been deprived of all his excuses for conversion, both his Manichaean and his sceptic excuses, and was confronted with the bare fact that he simply did not will his conversion strongly enough.

Then, the second aspect of what he learned from Paul became concrete for him: the grace of Christ. He depicts the revelation of God's grace to his mind as having released him from the attempt to force his own will to conversion. He was driven out of himself to God in prayer. And God responded to this prayer by pointing Augustine to a biblical text (Rom. 13:13) that created in him the will to leave behind his secular career and his desire for marriage.

This conversion in the garden of Milan is often regarded as the decisive moment of Augustine's return to God. I will argue, however, that this is not consonant with Augustine's view of the remaining influence of the punishment of sin in a Christian. As Augustine argues in book 10, the struggle between flesh and spirit continues in the Christian life. He even says that the victory of this battle remains uncertain until the end.[164] The new will does not possess any stability in itself. It seems to me that Augustine, after his conversion-experience in the garden of Milan, needed to learn that he could not build his Christian life upon the experience of certainty he had received in the garden. Underneath his new self, he still dragged the old self with its iniquities along, which would sooner or later strike back. Only faith in Christ, expressed through the reception of baptism, would empty the power of the punishment of sin over Augustine's new self.

This shows that the evolution of Augustine's thought on sin and its punishment, and on the work of Christ, affected the way in which he later evaluated his own conversion. Already at Cassiciacum he was confronted

[163] At the beginning of book 8, Augustine observes that he has certainty about God's transcendence and of Christ as the way to the fatherland, but that concerning his temporal life everything was uncertain. *conf.* 8,1, CCL 27,113: '*De mea uero temporali uita nutabant omnia.*' He doubted about the life he needed to choose, and therefore turned for advice to Simplicianus.

[164] *conf.* 10,39.

with the remaining stains of habit upon his soul (cf. *Soliloquia*) and his need for ongoing purgation by the divine doctor. In the *Confessions*, Augustine takes up this line of thought, and connects it to his newly won insights on the work of Christ. The new life cannot be built upon anything present in the will itself (even if it is received by divine grace), but it must be rooted in Christ, in whom man has been redeemed from the claim of sin over him, the influence of which remains present in the life after baptism.[165]

Augustine *sub lege*

The first exemplary story that persuaded Augustine about the way of life he had to assume was the story of the Roman philosopher and rhetor Marius Victorinus. Augustine, confused about the way of life he had to assume after his conversion, turned for advice to Simplicianus and told him about his past errors and his reading of the books of the Platonists, translated by Victorinus. Simplicianus congratulated Augustine with the fact that he had read the right philosophers and not those who have fallen in deceit 'according to the elements of this world' (Col. 2:8). What Augustine lacked still, however, in Simplicianus' view, was the humility of Christ. 'Then, to exhort me to the humility of Christ hidden from the wise and revealed to babes, he recalled his memory of Victorinus himself.'[166] Simplicianus related that Victorinus, a pagan Neoplatonist philosopher and rhetor, had started to read the Scriptures and Christian writers later in his life, and at a certain moment called himself a Christian. Simplicianus said to him that he did not believe this until he saw Victorinus in church. He had to proclaim publicly that he belonged to the people of Christ, and had abandoned the city of the devil and his angels. But Victorinus was afraid of the slander he would suffer from his pagan colleagues. However, while he reflected on this and read the Scripture, he was suddenly filled with fear of Christ's judgement. He felt that if he did not publicly renounce the devil and confess Christ, Christ would neither confess him before his Father in heaven, but rather condemn him with the devil and his angels, whom he had worshipped together with his Neoplatonist colleagues.[167]

[165] Markus, *Saeculum*, 144, describes Augustine's theology of postbaptismal life as breaking with an earlier 'Christianity of discontinuity' (a term borrowed from Peter Brown, 'Pelagius and his Supporters: Aims and Environment', *Journal of Theological Studies* 19/1 (1968), 93–114), according to which baptism emancipated a Christian from the power of his own past. For a critical evaluation of the contention that this idea represented the mainstream patristic tradition before Augustine, see Peter Burnell, 'Concupiscence and Moral Freedom in Augustine and before Augustine', *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995), 49–63.

[166] *conf.* 8,3, CCL 27,114: '*Deinde, ut me exhortaretur ad humilitatem Christi sapientibus absconditam et reuelatam paruulis, Victorinum ipsum recordatus est.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 135).

[167] *conf.* 8,4.

This fear of Christ's judgement motivated Victorinus to ask Simplicianus to take him to church in order to be baptized. To this story, Simplicianus added another anecdote from Victorinus' life about Emperor Julian's promulgation of a law that forbade Christians to teach literature and rhetoric. This law made Victorinus gladly leave 'the school of chatter' (*loquacem scholam*). These stories 'inflamed' (*exarsi*) Augustine with the desire to follow Victorinus' example, and free himself from his worldly occupations.[168]

Another story that set Augustine on fire to free himself for God was told to him by Ponticianus. On a certain day, this African court official visited Augustine and to his surprise he discovered a Pauline codex on Augustine's desk; at his remark, Augustine told him that he studied Paul. In response, Ponticianus seized the occasion to tell Augustine about the life of Anthony and the monastic movement that originated in his vein. In his story, he focused on two particular persons, *agentes in rebus* (imperial court officials), who were converted to the monastic life by reading Anthony's life story. They encountered Anthony's *Vita*, written by Athanasius, in a certain house; and when one of them read it, his present life as a state official occurred to him as vanity, and he was set on fire (*accendere*) to sell everything he had (Luke 14:28) and to convert to the monastic life.[169] He told his friend about his experience and his friend decided to follow him. They agreed with their fiancées that all of them would lead a life of celibacy. And thus it happened. It goes without saying that Augustine relates this story as exemplary to him, because at the time it was told to him he was still bound to the desire for marriage.

Both of these stories inflamed in Augustine a delight in the law, but simultaneous with this delight in the law of God, the law of sin in his members imposed itself upon him with irresistible force. After hearing the story about Victorinus, he knew that he had to abandon his worldly occupations, but 'the burden of the world weighed me down with a sweet drowsiness such as commonly occurs during sleep'.[170] With regard to the story of Pontitianus, Augustine's description of his battle with the flesh is even more severe. God confronts him with his own iniquity and Augustine believes God is right, but at the same time he tries to hide himself from himself.

> You, however, Lord, turned me back to myself while he was speaking, taking me from my back, where I had set myself, as I did not want to see myself, and to set me before my face (Cf. Ps. 49:21), so that I would see how vile I was, how distorted and filthy, covered with sores and ulcers. And I looked and I was horrified, but there was no way of fleeing from myself (Cf. Ps. 138:7). And if I tried to avert my gaze from myself, he continued his story, and you placed me back in front of myself and you threw me before my own eyes, so that I would

[168] *conf.* 8,10. [169] *conf.* 8,15.

[170] *conf.* 8,12, CCL 27,120: '*Ita sarcina saeculi, uelut somno assolet, dulciter premebar.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 141).

> discover my iniquity and hate it. I had known it, but was repressing it and refusing to admit it and forgetting it.[171]

Augustine explains that he now experienced what he had read in Paul about the struggle between flesh and spirit,[172] but he no longer interpreted this experience in a Manichaean way. It was not a contrary nature that battled against him; rather, it was his own will that suffered internal division as a consequence of the sin of Adam and of his own subsequent sins.[173]

After leaving the Manichaeans, he had still found a reason to excuse himself for his sins by saying, with the Academics, that the truth had not dawned on him with certainty.[174] He had not known with certainty what his moral obligation was. However, after the revelation in book 7, Augustine had no excuses left. He just did not want his conversion strongly enough: '[My soul] held itself back, it refused and did not excuse itself. Exhausted were the arguments; they were all refuted. What had remained was a mute trembling and as if facing death it was afraid of being restrained from the flux of habit, along which it wasted away towards death.'[175]

Augustine had arrived at the root problem that impeded his conversion: the will itself, suffering under the punishment of its own sins, which divided it against itself. It is this experience of complete responsibility before God and the self-inflicted inability to fulfil this responsibility that brought Augustine to a state of madness. God made him feel guilt and fear in the face of the law,[176] but Augustine was unable to fulfil the righteousness that it demanded. And because he had not yet come to surrender himself to the grace of God, but tried to solve the discrepancy by himself, he was kept in a state of suspense.[177]

[171] *conf.* 8,16, CCL 27,123: '*Tu autem, domine, inter uerba eius retorquebas me ad me ipsum, auferens me a dorso meo, ubi me posueram, dum nollem me attendere, et constituebas me ante faciem meam, ut uiderem, quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus. et uidebam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. Et si conabar auertere a measpectum, narrabat ille quod narrabat, et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos, ut inuenirem iniquitatem meam et odissem. noueram eam, sed dissimulabam et cohibebam et obliuiscebar*.'

[172] *conf.* 8,11, CCL 27,120: '*Sic intellegebam me ipso experimento id quod legeram, quomodo caro concupisceret aduersus spiritum et spiritus aduersus carnem [Gal. 5,17]* . . .' On this text, see Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture*, 124–8.

[173] *conf.* 8,22.

[174] *conf.* 8,11, CCL 27,120: '*Et non erat iam illa excusatio, qua uideri mihi solebam propterea me nondum contempto saeculo seruire tibi, quia incerta mihi esset perceptio ueritatis: iam enim et ipsa certa erat*.'

[175] *conf.* 8,18, CCL 27,124–5: '*Et renitebatur, recusabat et non se excusabat. Consumpta erant et conuicta argumenta omnia: remanserat muta trepidatio et quasi mortem reformidabat restringi a fluxu consuetudinis, quo tabescebat in mortem*.'

[176] *conf.* 8,25, CCL 27,129: '*Et instabas tu in occultis meis, domine, seuera misericordia flagella ingeminans timoris et pudoris, ne rursus cessarem et non abrumperetur id ipsum exiguum et tenue, quod remanserat, et reualesceret iterum et me robustius alligaret*.'

[177] *conf.* 8,25, CCL 27,129: '*Sed non recutiebat retro nec auertebat, sed suspendebat*.'

Grace gives Way to the Confession of being Man *sub Lege*

Augustine tells us that a penultimate solution arose for him when, in the midst of the inner struggle between his old loves and his new love, lady Continence (*continentia*) presented herself to him not just as law, but as divine gift.[178] Showing Augustine the many examples that went before him, she smiled at him with an exhortative smile and asked:

> 'Will you not be able to do what those men and women have done? Or do you think that they can do it in themselves and not in the Lord your God? The Lord their God has given me to them. What do you stand in your self, and not remain standing? Throw yourself on him and fear not. He will not withdraw himself so that you fall. Make the leap with confidence. He will receive you and heal you.[179]

This offer of grace, Augustine believes, provided him with a way out of the impasse of internal division. He did not have to liberate himself from his penal condition. God would heal his wounded nature, so that he could fulfil the law.

Augustine sees the call of grace as having released him from his struggle under the law. He felt that he no longer had to suppress the profundity of his misery, because he did not have to liberate himself from it, but could trust in God's grace. This consideration immediately drew the entirety of his misery before his face, and made him burst out weeping, praying to God to put an end to his anger toward him:

> Where then [this] consideration drew from a hidden depth and brought before the sight of my heart the totality of my misery, a big storm occurred bearing a huge down pouring of tears . . . I threw myself down somehow under a certain fig tree, and let my tears flow freely. Rivers streamed from my eyes, a sacrifice acceptable to you (*Ps.* 50:19), and (though not in these words, yet in this sense) I repeatedly said to you: "And you Lord, how long? How long, Lord, will you be angry to the uttermost? Do not be mindful of our old iniquities." For I felt that these held me. I uttered miserable cries: "How long, how long, tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why not an end to my wretchedness in this very hour?"[180]

[178] *Continentia* is often translated as referring to sexual abstinence, but it denotes much more than that. As *conf.* 10,39ff. makes clear, it stands for the unified heart that has God as its sole object of worship, and uses creation to this end. Through *continentia* the heart is gathered from its dispersion in the many unto a unified love of the Creator (*conf.* 11,39).

[179] *conf.* 8,27, CCL 27,130: '*. . . tu non poteris, quod isti, quod istae? An uero isti et istae in se ipsis possunt ac non in domino deo suo? Dominus deus eorum me dedit eis. Quid in te stas et non stas? Proice te in eum, noli metuere; non se subtrahet, ut cadas: proice te securus, excipiet et sanabit te.*'

[180] *conf.* 8,28, CCL 27,130: '*Ubi uero a fundo arcano alta consideratio traxit et congessit totam miseriam meam in conspectu [Ps. 18,15] cordis mei, oborta est procella ingens ferens ingentem imbrem lacrimarum. ego sub quadam fici arbore straui me nescio quomodo et dimisi habenas lacrimis, et proruperunt flumina oculorum meorum, acceptabile sacrificium tuum, et non quidem his uerbis, sed in hac sententia multa dixi tibi: et tu, domine, usquequo? [Ps. 6,4] Usquequo,*

The force of the law and the promise of grace had drawn Augustine to confession. By God's grace working in his conscience, he had given himself to God and asked him to take away his anger. Finally, Augustine had been personally led to the acknowledgement that he was unable to recreate his own fallen soul, but that it had to be recreated by God.[181] First, God had brought him to the acknowledgement of his own responsibility as a sinner under the law; then, God had convinced him of his need for grace. In this way, Augustine suggests, the truths he had discovered in the Platonists and Paul became concrete for his own life.

Augustine tells us that he experienced the divine response to his confession in the words '*tolle lege*'. He interpreted these words as a divine admonition to open the Pauline codex that still lay on the table with Alypius. This admonition made him remember the story of Anthony, who also converted after having heard a Scripture reading, namely Matt. 19:21: 'Go and sell all you have, give it to the poor and you will have a treasure in heaven.' Augustine opened the codex and read Rom. 13:13: 'Not in riots and drunken parties, not in licentiousness and indecencies, not in strife and rivlry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make provision for the flesh in its lusts.'[182] When considering this text, 'all the darkness of doubt fled from [his] heart'.[183] God had called Augustine and had instilled in him a 'conquering delight' in the law, so that he could take the decision to leave his worldly ambition and desire for marriage behind.[184]

CASSICIACUM: ONGOING CONVERSION LEADING TO BAPTISM

It seems to me, however, that Augustine's newly received delight in the garden of Milan is not all he wants to say about his conversion, when he reflects on it in the *Confessions*.[185] Theologically, baptism should be seen as the central

domine, irasceris in finem? [Ps. 78,5] Ne memor fueris iniquitatum nostrarum antiquarum [Ps. 78,8]. Sentiebam enim eis me teneri. Iactabam uoces miserabiles: Quandiu, quandiu cras et cras? Quare non modo? Quare non hac hora finis turpitudinis meae?' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 252).

[181] Vannier, 'Creatio et formatio dans les *Confessions*', 191; Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Ecriture*, 289.

[182] *conf.* 8,29. [183] *conf.* 8,29.

[184] Augustine's conversion story affirms the theology of grace as expounded in *Ad Simplicianum* 1,2,21. God influences Augustine in such a way that the external circumstances effect faith and a conquering delight in him. Augustine believes and wills, but the ability to do so is not to be attributed to the human will. Cf. Drecoll, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, 323.

[185] Frederick J. Crosson has argued that the conversion story in the garden should not be read as an isolated event of divine intervention, but as one of the many stages (albeit a decisive one) in

moment of Augustine's return to God. Although it needs to be conceded that Augustine does not pay much attention to the event of his own baptism, at many points in the *Confessions* he emphasizes the decisive meaning of this rite for the Christian life.[186]

In baptism, Augustine teaches, God forgives both the original and the personal sins of the baptized and assures the believer that God is no longer angry with him, because of his sin.[187] In other words, through baptism the Christian is granted a new juridical position before God on the basis of which the penal consequences of sin lose their claim upon him. In book 10 of the *Confessions* Augustine emphasizes that the struggle between flesh and spirit continues in the life of a Christian. The experience of conversion does not at all assure one of one's victory over the penal consequences of one's sins. This is why incorporation into Christ is so important. Only in him does the believer have the assurance that the spell of sin has been broken.[188]

This is why I think that theologically, Augustine's baptism should receive the central place in his conversion. It is not without reason that Rom. 13:13 is a baptismal text, which implicitly seems to admonish Augustine to seek baptism.[189] This implicit admonition to seek baptism was also present in Simplicianus' story about Victorinus. Simplicanius admonished Augustine to the 'humility of Christ' by telling how Victorinus found the way to the Church and was baptized. It has even been argued that Monnica's vision of Augustine standing with her on the same 'wooden rule' (*regula lignea*),[190] refers to the wooden channel of baptismal water, and thus suggests Augustine's baptism. This interpretation is made even more credible when we read that Augustine, after his conversion, refers to the 'wooden rule' from his mother's dream as the 'rule of faith' (*regula fidei*),[191] the creed which was given to the *competentes* at the moment of their baptism.[192] It seems therefore that Augustine's conversion has not yet reached its 'destiny' in the garden of Milan. He must still be

God's ongoing providential dealings with Augustine from the moment of his birth (Crosson, 'Book Five: The Disclosure of Hidden Providence', in *A Reader's Guide to Augustine's Confessions*, edited by Kim Paffenroth (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 71–82 (84). This idea can be extended to the time after Augustine's conversion in Milan. God continues to 'convert' Augustine to grace. This leads to baptism, but also after baptism God continues to deepen Augustine's awareness of his need for God's grace.

[186] See Schamm, 'Taufe und Bekenntniss', 86–8; Michael Foley, 'The Sacramental Topography of the *Confessions*', 32–42; Pamela Bright, 'En-Spirited Waters: Baptism in the *Confessions* of Augustine', in *The Early Church in its Context. Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson*, edited by Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 48–58. Bright argues that Augustine is brief on the event of his own baptism, because he wants to emphasize that baptism itself is only the beginning of the new life.

[187] *conf.* 13,12. [188] *conf.* 5,16.

[189] Foley, 'The Sacramental Topography of the *Confessions*', 39. [190] *conf.* 3,19.

[191] *conf.* 8,30. [192] Foley, 'The Sacramental Topography of the *Confessions*', 40.

brought to the waters of baptism, in order to be incorporated into Christ, and to become 'light in the Lord' and 'a son of the day'.[193]

Augustine's stay at Cassiciacum can be interpreted as the period in which he was further convinced of the need to take this final step. This becomes clear from his own description of this period in the *Confessions.* On the one hand, he depicts his sojourn at Cassiciacum as a time in which he looked back upon the life he had lived and rejoiced in the fact that God had delivered him from his entanglement in vain loves and had 'constituted him in hope' of the future contemplation of God.[194] On the other hand, Augustine relates that God continued to level his pride. 'For my remembrance recalls, and it becomes sweet to me to confess to you, Lord, with what internal stings you subdued me and in what ways you levelled me by bringing down the mountains and hills of my thoughts, and made straight my crooked ways, and smoothed my roughness.'[195] Could it be that this pride consisted in the presumption that he had somehow emancipated himself from the influence of his past, and that he would soon be cured from the stains of his past and be ready for the vision of God? However this may be, it seems that Augustine needed to learn that below his new will still lurked the influence of his past. Our analysis of the *Soliloquia* confirmed this.

In the description of his Cassiciacum sojourn, Augustine relates an experience that supports the argument made above. God chastised him with a sudden toothache.[196] The toothache even deprived Augustine of his ability to speak. He asked his companions to pray for him, and upon their prayer the pain immediately left him. Augustine interprets this experience as a divine intervention with a deeper meaning. About this experience he writes: 'And your commands were made known to me in the depths (of my being) and I praised your name, rejoicing in faith, but that faith did not allow me to be saved from my former sins, which were not yet forgiven me in your baptism.'[197]

Augustine seems to interpret his sudden illness as a means through which God convinced him of his need to be released from the burden of his former sins. It might have reminded him of a similar experience he had in his youth,

[193] *conf.* 13,13.

[194] *conf.* 9,11, CCL 27,140: '*. . . sed tu, domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me [Ps. 4,10].*'

[195] *conf.* 9,7, CCL 27,137: '*reuocat enim me recordatio mea, et dulce mihi fit, domine, confiteri tibi, quibus internis me stimulis perdomueris et quemadmodum me complanaueris humilitatis montibus et collibus cogitationum mearum et tortuosa mea direxeris et aspera lenieris*.' Not without reason Augustine confesses that the writings composed at Cassiciacum still breathe the 'school of pride', albeit as from a runner who has stopped running.

[196] *conf.* 9,12, CCL 27,140: '*Sed nec oblitus sum nec silebo flagelli tui asperitatem et misericordiae tuae mirabilem celeritatem. dolore dentium tunc excruciabas me.*'

[197] *conf.* 9,12, CCL 27,140: '*Et insinuati sunt mihi in profundo nutus tui et gaudens in fide laudaui nomen tuum, et ea fides me securum esse non sinebat de praeteritis peccatis meis, quae mihi per baptismum tuum remissa nondum erant.*'

and a second time after his arrival in Rome, when he was suddenly overcome by a disease and faced death. In retrospect, he discerns how urgently he needed baptism, because of the load of sins he carried on his shoulders.[198] Only baptism could have set him free from the guilt of his past and its penal consequences. Augustine's sudden illness at Cassiciacum might have reminded him of these situations. Although he presently felt reborn through his newly gained resolutions, he became (suddenly) aware of the fact that he was still bound to the sins of his past, and to the ontological consequences of these sins on his soul. His future was not at all certain. The fear that this induced in him might have compelled him to ask for baptism from Ambrose. On the liberating effect of baptism he writes: 'We were baptized and the anxiety about our past life fled from us.'[199]

JUDGEMENT IN THE LIFE AFTER BAPTISM

This section addresses the salvific function of divine judgement in the life after baptism. First, I will expound Augustine's understanding of baptism itself. It is the beginning of new life, the change of man's forensic position before God, and the sure foundation of its completion. Simultaneously, Augustine regards the Christian after baptism as still suffering under the penal effects of his sins (this is why his new forensic position is so important). Second, I will address the function of God's law for Augustine in the life after baptism. How does the function of the law differ from the life before conversion and baptism? The difference is that man not only delights in the law according to the inner man, but also starts to *do* the law. In principle the discrepancy between the inner delight in the law and the doing of the law (*delectare—facere*), as observed by Paul, is resolved. This does not mean that the Christian now posseses the power to resist the assaults of habit and no longer consents to them (as Augustine had previously taught). Rather, he starts to obey the law by *confessing* his own disobedience to it. His suffering under the assaults of indwelling sin leads him to confession, and it is exactly by confessing sin that sin is conquered. In the act of confession, God's judgement and his grace cooperate salvifically in the believer.[200]

[198] *conf.* 5,16.

[199] *conf.* 9,15, CCL 27,141: '*Baptizati sumus et fugit a nobis sollicitudo uitae praeteritae.*'

[200] I am aware of the fact that the word *confessio* in Augustine has a broader range of meanings. It refers to the confession of faith (*confessio fidei*), the confession of praise (*confessio laudis*), and the confession of sin (*confessio peccati*). All of these meanings are interconnected. They come together in the fundamental acknowledgement of God as Creator and recreator of man. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, 'Originalität und Überlieferung in Augustinus' Begriff der Confessio', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 3/4 (1957), 375–92.

Light in the Lord and Still a Great Abyss

In the previous section, I argued that baptism must be regarded as the decisive turning point in Augustine's life. From the deferral of baptism, Augustine is eventually brought to its reception.[201] What exactly is conferred upon the believer in baptism? At several places Augustine states that one receives this sacrament unto the remission of sins.[202] Until that moment one stands guilty before God. In baptism one receives the pledge of incorporation into the mediator of righteousness. On that basis the guilt of one's past sins is removed. This is why Augustine says that the anxiety about his past evils fled from him only after the moment of his baptism. He was already converted, but he needed baptism in order to be assured of the forgiveness of his past sins.[203]

Furthermore, Augustine describes baptism as having a concrete effect upon the soul of the believer. 'Through faith and the sacrament you changed my soul,' he confesses (*mutans animam meam fide et sacramento tuo*).[204] Regularly, he uses the imagery of creation to describe the effects of baptism. He depicts the *competentes* as the invisible and unformed earth. Through faith and baptism they are recreated and become 'light in the Lord' (Eph. 5:8). This inner renewal forms the counterpart of the forgiveness of sins. On the basis of their new juridical position, believers receive the renewal of their mind and will. Through the discipline of Scripture and the example of the saints, the Spirit starts to recreate the believer in the image of God.[205]

However, this renewal remains an ongoing process in this life. Its completion stands out as a promise for the future 'when death will have been swallowed up unto victory'.[206] As Augustine puts it in *Conf.* 13,13-14: 'And behold, we once were darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. And yet we are so by faith, not yet by sight. For in hope we are saved. Hope, however, which is seen, is no hope.'[207] Augustine emphasizes that baptized believers still struggle with the darkness of their former lives. Even Paul—for Augustine, the most exemplary Christian—testifies to this struggle. He did not consider

[201] See footnote 32. [202] *conf.* 1,17; 9,15; 10,4.

[203] *conf.* 9,12, CCL 27,140: '*Et insinuati sunt mihi in profundo nutus tui et gaudens in fide laudaui nomen tuum, et ea fides me securum esse non sinebat de praeteritis peccatis meis, quae mihi per baptismum tuum remissa nondum erant.*'

[204] *conf.* 10,4. Cf. *conf.* 4,8 on the transformative effect of baptism on Augustine's friend. It changed him from a Manichaean into a confessing Christian.

[205] *conf.* 13,15–35.

[206] *conf.* 10,42, CCL 27,177: '*Nunc tamen quid adhuc sim in hoc genere mali mei, dixi bono domino meo exultans cum tremore [Ps. 2,11] in eo, quod donasti mihi, et lugens in eo, quod inconsummatus sum, sperans perfecturum te in me misericordias tuas usque ad pacem plenariam, quam tecum habebunt interiora et exteriora mea, cum absorpta fuerit mors in uictoriam [1 Cor. 15,54].*'

[207] *conf.* 13,14, CCL 27, 248–9: '*[Et ecce fuimus aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino [Eph. 5,8]]. Et tamen adhuc per fidem, nondum per speciem [2 Cor. 5,7]. Spe enim salui facti sumus. spes autem, quae uidetur, non est spes [Rm. 8,24].*'

himself as having grasped the heavenly prize, but, forgetting what lies behind, reaches forward, as someone who sighs as one oppressed, and thirsts for the living God as a deer after water springs, saying: 'When shall I come? (Ps. 42:1)'[208] With regard to himself, Augustine also emphasizes that he indeed has his moments of exultation in God, but these are like oases in the desert. 'I take a breath in you for a short while and pour out my soul above me with a voice of exultation and praise.'[209] Augustine refers here to the short moments of contemplation that God grants him during this life.[210] These are the first fruits of the Spirit, the testimony that in faith and hope he belongs to the heavenly city.[211] But these moments do not last long. 'Still [my soul] is sad, because it falls back and becomes an abyss, or rather feels that it still is an abyss.'[212] In other words, in themselves and left to themselves, believers are still in darkness. They do not even know the outcome of the battle that they have to fight with their old selves.[213] It is for this reason that Augustine says that he does not pass any definitive judgement on himself or on others.[214] A victorious outcome of his ongoing battle with sin can only be granted by the Lord himself, who is both his judge and saviour. Whoever boasts, let him boast 'in the Lord'.[215]

However, Augustine does not perceive this existence of the Christian between darkness and future contemplation as an uncertain situation, as if the new life can be lost at any moment when the flesh fights back. On the contrary, through faith the starving deer is assured that he will not die in the desert and will not be consumed by the darkness of the night. As Augustine has it:

[208] *conf.* 13,14.

[209] *conf.* 13,15, CCL 27,250: '*Respiro in te paululum [Io. 32,30], cum effundo super me animam meam in uoce exultationis et confessionis soni festiuitatem celebrantis [Ps. 41,5].*'

[210] On several occasions, Augustine testifies to the significance of contemplative experiences in the post-baptismal life. The most famous one is of course the vision he had with his mother at Ostia (*conf.* 9,23–5). Also in *conf.* 10,65 and 11,2 he relates his ascentional exercises, and the contemplative experiences God granted through them. However, Augustine no longer regards contemplation as a state that endures. It has become a momentary glimpse of the life to come, which is only received in full, when we are invited to 'enter the joy of our Lord' (Matt. 25:21) and when 'life is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:51). Nonetheless, these experiences function as added assurances that through faith we already enjoy the spiritual life of the *caelum caeli.* On this function of contemplation in Augustine's Christian life, see John Peter Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 89–109 (on the transformation of the function of Neoplatonic contemplation in Augustine); idem, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity*, 151–61 (on the vision of Ostia).

[211] On Augustine's interpretation of the *primitiae spiritus* (Rom. 8:23), see Jean Pépin, '"Primitiae spiritus": remarques sur une citation paulinienne des *Confessions* de saint Augustin', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 140/2 (1951), 155–202.

[212] *conf.* 13,15, CCL 27,250: '*Et adhuc tristis est, quia relabitur et fit abyssus, uel potius sentit adhuc se esse abyssum.*'

[213] *conf.* 10,39, CCL 27,175: '*Contendunt laetitiae meae flendae cum laetendis maeroribus, et ex qua parte stet uictoria nescio.*'

[214] *conf.* 10,6. Augustine refers to 2 Cor. 4:3.

[215] Cf. Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae*, 122–4.

> My faith says to my soul, my faith which you have kindled in the night before my feed: 'Why are you so sad, soul, and why do you disturb me? Hope in the Lord; his word is a lamp for your feet. Hope and persevere, until the night has passed, the mother of the wicked, until the wrath of the Lord has passed, whose sons also we have been when we were once darkness, the remnants of which we drag along in the body that is mortal because of sin, until the day dawns and the shadows are removed.' 'Hope in the Lord': I will stand in the morning and contemplate; I will praise you evermore. In the morning I will stand and I will see the salvation of my face, my God, who will vivify our mortal bodies because of the Spirit, who dwells in us, because he mercifully hovered over our interior darkness and fluidity. From him we have received in this pilgrimage the assurance that we are already light in the Lord. While we are still saved in hope we are sons of light and sons of the day, not sons of the night and the darkness, which we yet have been.[216]

In this passage, Augustine states that the Spirit assures Christ's members that they are sons of the day and thus will not be conquered by the remaining darkness that is still in them and by which they are regularly overcome.

But on what basis does Augustine know this? How can he be certain that God's mercy will outweigh his righteous judgement over the sins of his people? In order to understand this we must clarify the connection between Augustine's understanding of the work of Christ and his pneumatology in the *Confessions*. As we have seen, in baptism believers are incorporated into Christ. In Christ the penal consequences of sin have been broken, because Christ bore the punishment of sin as the righteous one.[217] Christ's death on the cross thus provides the warrant that the wrath of God that is still present in Christ's members will pass and that they will contemplate God for all eternity. The Spirit then, in his turn, does two things. First, he gives assurance of the hope believers may have of their future redemption. As Augustine has it in the passage quoted above: 'From him [the spirit that hovers over our darkness and fluidity] we have received an assurance in our pilgrimage that we are light . . . that we are sons of the light and of the day.'[218] Second, this assurance is accompanied by a new delight: the Spirit transforms the weight of cupidity into the weight of heaven-directed love. He lifts the soul up from darkness and

[216] *conf.* 13,15, CCL 27,250: 13,15 '*Dicit ei fides mea, quam accendisti in nocte ante pedes meos: quare tristis es, anima, et quare conturbas me? Spera in domino [Ps. 41,6], lucerna pedibus tuis uerbum [Ps. 118,105] eius. Spera [Ps. 41,6] et perseuera, donec transeat nox, mater iniquorum, donec transeat ira domini, cuius filii et nos fuimus aliquando tenebrae, quarum residua trahimus in corpore propter peccatum [Rm. 8,10] mortuo, donec aspiret dies et remoueantur umbrae [Ct. 2,17]. Spera in domino [Ps. 41,6]: mane astabo [Ps. 5,5] et contemplabor; semper confitebor illi [Ps. 42,5]. Mane astabo et uidebo [Ps. 5,5] salutare uultus mei [Ps. 42,5], deum meum, qui uiuificabit et mortalia corpora nostra propter spiritum, qui habitat in nobis [Rm. 8,11], quia super interius nostrum tenebrosum et fluuidum misericorditer superferebatur [Gn. 1,2]. Unde in hac peregrinatione pignus [2 Cor. 5,5] accepimus, ut iam simus lux [Eph. 5,8], dum adhuc spe salui facti sumus et filii lucis et filii diei, non filii noctis neque tenebrarum [1 Th. 5,5], quod tamen fuimus.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions,* 281-82, adapted).

[217] *conf.* 7,27. [218] *conf.* 13,15.

preserves it from the waters of chaos, until it has attained its resting place in the house of God. As Augustine puts it in book 13 of the *Confessions*:

> The impurity of our spirit flows downwards because of our love of cares, and your holiness draws us upwards in a love of security, so that we may have our heart lifted up towards you, where your Spirit is born over the waters, and come to your supereminent rest, when our soul has passed over the waters that are without substance . . . That love lifts us up and your good Spirit elevates our humility from the gates of death . . . Through your fire, your good fire we are kindled and we go . . . to the peace of Jerusalem.[219]

This assurance of and desire for salvation form the basis of Augustine's prayers in the last books of the *Confessions*. He asks God to give what he commands (book 10) and to grant him understanding of what he believes from the words of Scripture (book 11). These prayers breathe boldness in addressing God and confidence that God will not reject Augustine, because Augustine prays in the name of Christ 'who intercedes for us'.[220] In him God has made himself our debtor: he has obliged himself to give us what he commands.[221] Christ's mediation provides the solid ground for confidence that those who ask will receive, those who seek will find, and to those who knock will be let in (Matt. 7:7–8).[222]

Doing the Truth is Coming to the Light: *Confessio Laudis* and *Confessio Peccati*

We observed that the new life after baptism consists of a new delight in God as the sole object of worship. The fallen soul has started to live according the spirit. By this new delight man is gradually drawn towards God. He is recreated through the Spirit in the image of God, according to God's original design. However, this delight is continuously challenged by the remaining influence of habit, that part of the soul that is still 'a great abyss'. The battle between the flesh and the spirit still continues after baptism. Nonetheless, it is placed in a new context, namely the context of grace. The Christian uses the law spiritually by not concealing the darkness of his soul, but by confessing it. In this way he 'does the truth' and 'comes to the light' (John 3:21).[223]

[219] *conf.* 13,8–10, CCL 27,245–7: '*Immunditia spiritus nostri defluens inferius amore curarum et sanctitas tui attollens nos superius amore securitatis, ut sursum cor habeamus ad te, ubi spiritus tuus superfertur super aquas [Gn. 1,2], et ueniamus ad supereminentem requiem, cum pertransierit anima nostra aquas, quae sunt sine substantia [Ps. 123,5] . . . amor illuc attollit nos et spiritus tuus bonus exaltat humilitatem nostram de portis mortis [Ps. 9,14sq.] . . . igne tuo, igne tuo bono inardescimus et imus, quoniam sursum imus ad pacem Hierusalem [Ps. 121,6].*'

[220] *conf.* 10,47; 10,69; 11,4. [221] *conf.* 5,17; cf. e.g. *en. Ps.* 39,3; 40,14; 83,16.

[222] *conf.* 11,22. [223] *conf.* 10,1.

Confessio laudis

Man's delight in God comes to function in the context of *confessio.* On the one hand, this means that Augustine praises God for the extent to which the law has already been fulfilled in his life. This is the *confessio laudis.* In book 10 Augustine praises God for the fact he has converted Augustine from seeking God outside of himself in creation, to an acknowledgement of God as the transcendent Creator. God had been present everywhere, but Augustine had refused to acknowledge him. Finally, however, God had removed his deafness and blindness, and enkindled Augustine's love for him. As Augustine has it in the famous words of *Confessions* 10,38:

> You were with me, but I was not with you. These things held me far away from you, which would not be if they were not in you. You have called and shouted and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent and put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst after you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.[224]

Augustine sees his conversion as God's victory over his resistance to God's law, which had been accusing him in many ways. God had healed both his faculty of judgement and his will. Thus, the knowledge of God's law and his gift of obedience had come together in Augustine's conversion, and now constitute his way of life. He has been brought back to the path for which Adam was designed, namely to use creation as a stepping stone to the enjoyment of God.[225] This sometimes even leads to moments of contemplation for Augustine, 'extraordinary depths of feeling, marked by a strange sweetness. If it were brought to perfection in me, it would be an experience quite beyond anything in this life.'[226] His incipient fulfilment of God's law is rewarded with foretastes of the life to come in the *caelum caeli.*

Confessio peccati

However, Augustine simultaneously experiences that his love of God remains contested. 'But I fall back into my usual ways under my miserable burdens. I am reabsorbed by my habitual practices. I am held in their grip. I weep profusely, but still I am held. Such is the strength of the burden of habit. Here

[224] *conf.* 10,38, CCL 27,175: '*Mecum eras, et tecum non eram. Ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te non essent, non essent. Vocasti et clamasti et rupisti surditatem meam, coruscasti, splenduisti et fugasti caecitatem meam, flagrasti, et duxi spiritum et anhelo tibi, gustaui et esurio et sitio, tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam.*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 201, adapted).

[225] *conf.* 10,40–65.

[226] *conf.* 10,65, CCL 27,191: '*[Et aliquando intromittis me in] affectum multum inusitatum introrsus ad nescio quam dulcedinem, quae si perficiatur in me, nescio quid erit, quod uita ista non erit*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 218).

I have the power to be, but do not wish it. There I wish to be, but lack the power.'[227] Augustine's incipient fulfilment of the law of God and its rewards are continuously challenged by the assaults of *consuetudo*, so that he cannot maintain a state of contemplative sight. In this regard, there is no difference between his experiences of ascent before and after his conversion.[228] It is exactly the love of God, the desire of the future life, that makes Augustine aware of the levels of his soul that do not yet comply with his new delight.[229] He remains a man suffering under inner division. Augustine's self-scrutiny in the second half of book 10 of the *Confessions* testifies to this deep awareness.

However, Augustine deals with his disobedience to the law in a different fashion after his conversion than before. It leads him to confession. His delight in God and his grace helps him to lay his remaining sins and weaknesses open to God and invoke him as the healer of his soul. In other words, the accusation of the law does not hold Augustine captive to fear (leading to suppression of what he should do), but effects a continuous return to Christ as the one through whom the cracked soul is unified. This becomes clear from the structure of book 10 of the *Confessions*. In this book Augustine confesses the duplicity of his heart, not only before, but also after his conversion and baptism. He longs for God and desires to obey him wholeheartedly, but still experiences the operation of the law of sin in his members. This leads him to the cry that sounds very much like the cry of Paul in Rom. 7:25, with which Augustine characterized his state *sub lege*. But now this inner division does not lead him to despair, but to a boasting in the grace of Christ:

> Who would I find to reconcile me to you? . . . . The true Mediator you showed and sent. . . . in your secret mercy . . . How you have loved us, good Father, you who did not 'spare your only Son but delivered him up for us sinners' . . . With good reason my firm hope is in him. For you will cure all my diseases through him who sits at your right and intercedes for us. Otherwise I would be in despair.[230]

[227] *conf.* 10,65, CCL 27, 191: '*Sed recido in haec aerumnosis ponderibus et resorbeor solitis et teneor et multum fleo, sed multum teneor. Tantum consuetudinis sarcina digna est! Hic esse ualeo nec uolo, illic uolo nec ualeo, miser utrubique*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 218).

[228] Cf. Drecoll, *Entstehung*, 342.

[229] *conf.* 10,39, CCL 27,175: '*Cum inhaesero tibi ex omni me, nusquam erit mihi dolor et labor, et uiua erit uita mea tota plena te. Nunc autem quoniam quem tu imples, subleuas eum, quoniam tui plenus non sum, oneri mihi sum. Contendunt laetitiae meae flendae cum laetandis maeroribus, et ex qua parte stet uictoria nescio. Contendunt maerores mei mali cum gaudiis bonis, et ex qua parte stet uictoria nescio. ei mihi! Domine, miserere mei!*'

[230] *conf.* 10,68–9, CCL 27,191–2: '*Quem inuenirem, qui me reconciliaret tibi? . . . uerax autem mediator, quem secreta tua misericordia demonstrasti . . . misisti . . . quomodo nos amasti, pater bone, qui filio tuo unico non pepercisti, sed pro nobis impiis [Rm. 8,32] tradidisti eum! . . . merito mihi spes ualida in illo est, quod sanabis omnes languores meos per eum, qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis [Rm 8,34]: alioquin desperarem*' (translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 218–20, slightly adapted).

This quotation shows the great difference between the effect of the law's accusation before Augustine's conversion and after. Before his conversion, it brought Augustine to a state of despair and madness. In the context of grace, however, it brings him to deepened humility about himself, and exultation in the Lord. The law has come to serve the work of grace in Augustine and the glorification of God as Augustine's recreator.

Contemplating the law of God in the service of Christ's body

This changed function of the law (from working condemnation into serving grace) also influences Augustine's self-understanding and confidence as a bishop. As we observed in Chapter 3, it was this work that he feared, because of the many temptations of the life among 'iniquitous men'. Life in the world, especially 'the furnace of human tongue',[231] seduced him to give in to the desire for praise still present in his heart.

At the end of book 10, Augustine refers to a moment at which the despair about his own sins and the 'pile of his misery' had made him consider a flight into solitude. This autobiographical note might refer to the period of his life recorded in *Epistula* 20, where Augustine relates how his congregational responsibilities confronted him with his inability to serve the people well. It might equally well refer to another moment in his ecclesial career, maybe to the moment of his ordination as a bishop. In any case, it illustrates that Augustine as a bishop still had his moments of despair about the power of his old life over him, and felt inclined to 'solve' his inner division by focusing on self-transformation, and avoiding the external influences that obstructed this process. Moreover, as the citation below illustrates, Augustine had to do with people who 'spoke evil of him', probably because of his generally known past as a Manichaean.

Augustine continues, however, by relating that Christ held him back from putting his considerations into practice. Christ reminded Augustine of the fact that he belonged to the people for whom Christ had died. He must trust in Christ's transformative power. Therefore, he should not withdraw in isolation to work on his own transformation, but is called to join the community of those for whom Christ has given himself and serve this community in his name. As Christ has liberated Augustine from the claim of sin, he is free to forget himself, and serve others, despite his past and of the sin that still indwells him. Augustine writes:

> But you forbade me and comforted me saying: 'that is why Christ died for all, so that those who live should not live for themselves, but for him who died for them' (2 Cor. 5:15). See, Lord, 'I cast my anxiety on you that I may live and contemplate

[231] *conf.* 10,62–3.

> the wonders of your law. You know my inexperience and weakness: teach me and heal me' (Ps. 6:3; 142:10). Your only Son in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2:3) has redeemed me by his blood' (Rev. 5:9). 'Let not the proud speak evil of me' (Ps. 118:22), for I think upon the price of my redemption, and I eat and drink it, and distribute it. In my poverty I desire to be satisfied from it together with those who 'eat and are satisfied' (Ps. 61:5). 'And they shall praise the Lord who seek him' (Ps. 21:27).[232]

Augustine's discovery of grace thus liberated him to serve others. This seems to be one of the explanations why Augustine could write the *Confessions* at all. He did not have to hide his former life, but could put it in the service of the Church, and of those outside the Church. He could present his own life in the mirror of the law, because he had been released from fear of condemnation. And thus he could openly present his sins and God's judgement over them, in order to exhort others to confess their own sins, accept God's judgement over them, and call upon him in his grace.[233] In this way, God did not only put the law in the service of the glorification of his grace in the life of Augustine. In doing so, he also liberated Augustine to place the law in the service of God's grace for others, by telling the story of his own life in the light of both God's justice and God's mercy. Just as God had used the life stories of other saints to bring Augustine under the law and show him the liberating power of his grace (book 8), God makes Augustine into one of the saints through whose life story God convinces others of their sins and brings them to confession and conversion.

CONCLUSION

How does God's justice function in relation to his grace? And how is Augustine's theological development on this question reflected in his theological autobiography?

In Chapter 4 we concluded that Augustine during the 390s developed a Pauline understanding of the relationship between law and grace. The law

[232] *conf.* 10,70, CCL 27,193: '*Conterritus peccatis meis et mole miseriae meae agitaueram corde meditatusque fueram fugam in solitudinem, sed prohibuisti me et confirmasti me dicens: ideo Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, ut qui uiuunt iam non sibi uiuant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est [2 Cor. 5,15]. Ecce, domine, iacto in te curam meam, ut uiuam, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua [Ps. 118,18]. Tu scis imperitiam meam et infirmitatem meam: doce me et sana me [Ps. 142,10]. Ille tuus unicus, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi [Col. 2,3], redemit me sanguine suo. non calumnientur mihi superbi, quoniam cogito pretium meum et manduco et bibo et erogo et pauper cupio saturari ex eo inter illos, qui edunt et saturantur: et laudant dominum qui requirunt eum [Ps. 21,27].*' (Translation: Chadwick, *Confessions*, 220).

[233] *conf.* 10,4; *retr.* 2,1.

exposed man as suffering under the dominion of sin, and as destined to damnation, if he would not be justified through the grace of Christ. Augustine came to connect this grace much more to the death of Christ. His death emptied the power of sin, death, and the devil over us, and changed our forensic situation before God. The pedagogy of punishment is now exercised on this basis, namely to discipline the believer in the righteousness received in Christ and to make the believer grow in the knowledge of grace.

It is this Pauline understanding of the relationship between God's justice and mercy that defines Augustine's theological autobiography. His autobiography can be understood as a lawsuit that God brought against him from the moment of the deferral of his baptism until the moment he was finally incorporated into Christ through baptism. Augustine depicts himself in his youth as suffering under God's condemnation on account of Adam's sin. His baptism could have been the beginning of the healing of his nature, but his mother deferred it, so that Augustine was delivered to his own adamic nature. Consequently, he lived out his life in the flesh according to his threefold concupiscence, adding to the guilt he contracted from Adam. We further observed that Augustine sees God as having punished him for his sins, thus accusing him and calling him to return. Augustine went away from him, but he met the omnipresent God everywhere in his anger. As O'Connell has observed, this theme echoes the Plotinian idea of cosmic justice, but in Augustine it loses its pedagogical function. God restrained Augustine's sins, and continuously reminded him through his sufferings that his life in the flesh only led to unhappiness, but Augustine remained for a time completely deaf to God's voice, continuing to 'store up wrath for the day of judgment'.[234]

Augustine attributes it to God's grace that he was reawakened to the life of the spirit by reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*. This reading confronted him with the need to break with his present way of life. However, this interior delight in 'the law of the mind' could not conquer the power of the flesh over him. Rather, the flesh affirmed its claims over Augustine, which found its expression in his rejection of the Scriptures and his choice of Manichaeism. The flesh led his mind captive to the law of sin, so that Augustine was unable to discern the divine law, which commands us to rule over corporeal creation and strive after the contemplation of the incorporeal God. He sees his adherence to Manichaeism as a punishment for his pride against God: rather than bringing him to the struggle with the flesh, Manichaean materialism even dragged him deeper into the flesh, and its dualism precluded his awareness and confession of his own sins. Even after his abandonment of the Manichees, his inability to discern spiritual reality kept hindering him from becoming man *sub lege*. He continued to search for wisdom, but he did so according to the demands of

[234] Cf. *conf.* 9,10.

the flesh. Therefore, God continued to chastise him on account of his disobedience, but as Augustine did not have any certainty about the truth or a way to interpret God's activity in his life, he remained bound to sin.

It is God who finally brought Augustine under the law through his reading of the books of the Platonists. He discovered God as Creator, himself as a creature made to contemplate God, and the rest of creation as created good, although less in being. This new metaphysic enabled Augustine to understand evil as a voluntary turning away from God, and its punishment, the resulting consequences. Thus he came to see himself as man under the law. By God's grace, Augustine had overcome the misconstruction of the battle between flesh and spirit by the Manichees and had come to delight in the law. The moral implications of his vision of God were subsequently elaborated through his encounters with Simplicianus and Pontitianus. In listening to their stories, Augustine's resistance to God's law reached its climax: he was deprived of all his excuses, but he still did not want to obey fully. He feared divine punishment and restrained his sinful inclinations, but he was unable to liberate himself unto obedience to God.

It was the call of grace which set him free to call upon God 'against God', to ask him to liberate Augustine's will from its bondage to sin. He experienced the divine response to this prayer in the immediate certainty that he wanted to abandon his worldly career and desire for marriage. God created in him a *delectatio victrix*, which resolved his inner division. Although God's grace fulfilled in Augustine the righteousness that the law demands, Augustine, however, had to be subdued further by God's chastisement. He had indeed made the principal transition from fear to love, from being under the law to being under grace, but it seems that he somehow thought that the struggle with his old self belonged to the past. He had to be convinced that the old life is still present underneath his new resolutions (as we already witnessed in our analysis of the *Soliloquia*). God exposed Augustine to this reality; this induced within Augustine the fear of the punishment he still deserves for his former sins. This led him to desire baptism, as in baptism the believer is united to Christ, in whom he receives a new forensic position: from deserving condemnation because of his sins, he comes to deserve liberation from condemnation on account of the righteousness of Christ. In Christ the divine justice is reversed from penal to restorative. Augustine is very critical of the Neoplatonist way of mediation, because they fail to appropriate their sinful selves as their real selves. They want to liberate themselves from sin's punishment without confessing its cause, which keeps them in the hands of the mediator of pride, the devil, and ensures their guilt and condemnation under the law.

Augustine thus understands grace in the *Confessions* as laying a new juridical basis for the Christian life. This is why penal divine justice no longer fills Augustine with the fear of condemnation, but rather comes to function in the service of the appropriation of the righteousness received by Christ. He no

longer experiences the law of sin, which is present in his members, as leading him to condemnation; it rather functions in the service of confession, and as such in the service of growing in the love of God himself. Augustine's exercises of ascent feature in this confessional framework. On the one hand, his moments of sight are rewards for his delight in the law of God, first fruits of the Spirit. On the other hand, in his falling back, he is exercised in the dependence upon Christ's justifying grace. In this regard, Augustine's understanding of ascent has changed from a method of attaining perfection in this life, into a method of exercising the hope of the future life and the dependence upon God's grace to arrive there.

The context of grace also helps Augustine to use his own life story in the service of the conversion of others. As he no longer needs to fear condemnation from God or other people, he is released to write down his own experiences in the light of God's justice (and of his mercy), in order foster the correction and conversion of others.

6

Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

This book has addressed the question of how Augustine perceived of the function of God's judgement over sin in the process of salvation. In the introductory chapter, I placed this question in three different, but related contexts: the context of anti-Gnostic polemics, represented by Clement and Origen; the context of classical psychagogy; and the debate on the salvific function of law and punishment in the early Augustine. These contexts yielded three questions:

1. How does Augustine use elements from the tradition of philosophical pedagogy? Which elements does he use and where does he take a specifically Christian path?
2. How does Augustine relate to the anti-Gnostic tradition, which, out of a desire to reconcile God's goodness and his justice, presented the divine punishment of sin as part of a pedagogical project, in which human free will cooperates with the divine teaching?
3. What is the place and function of punishment in Augustine's understanding of the operation of grace? Is it true that Augustine develops from a defender of free will and rational persuasion to a proponent of external coercion? Does he indeed change his view on the relationship between Old and New Testament with regard to the use of temporal punishment?

DIVINE JUDGEMENT AND PHILOSOPHICAL PEDAGOGY

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the research presented in this book is that Augustine placed himself within the tradition of philosophical pedagogy. His positive evaluation of restraint and temporal punishment should primarily be approached from that context, rather than from the development of his doctrine of sin, or an evolution in his view on the

relationship between the Old and the New Testament. Furthermore, both his understandings of the relationship between the law and Christ, and of ecclesiastical discipline prove to be influenced by elements from this tradition.

In the Cassiciacum Dialogues, Augustine shows himself an heir to the Stoic and Neoplatonist understanding of providence as a pedagogical force. The fallen soul is admonished by the evils it suffers to return to itself and restrain its attachment to the changeable world. It does so through philosophical exercise, which is understood in medical terms as a cure of the mind (*medicina animi*). This is what Augustine does, and what he admonishes his patron Romanianus to do, after the violent admonitions of fortune.

However, we also concluded that Augustine starts to Christianize this way of thinking. He understands the buffetings of fortune as sent by a personal God, rather than as part of an impersonal order, inherent to the universe. Furthermore, it is the Christian religion that Augustine sees as the true cure of the mind. God's violent admonition is primarily meant to compel Augustine to bow to the authority of Christ, the divine Logos who has assumed a human body to heal fallen souls by his salvific teaching. The buffetings of fortune in and of themselves do not achieve this in men. Rather, the human mind needs the right philosophy (i.e. Christianity) to understand who addresses him in his sufferings, namely the personal God of Christianity; and it needs to know that his Wisdom and Power has come down to help humans to ascend to God, and can be called upon in prayer.

Another aspect that reveals how Augustine conceptualizes the salvific meaning of judgement within a classical pedagogical framework is in the dialogues he organized at Cassiciacum. In these dialogues, his pupils were called to correct each other by exchanging arguments, in order to train their minds in the discovery of truth. However, they unfortunately proved to be driven more by a love of praise and competition, than by the love of truth and the neighbour. This led Augustine to the use of restraint, a pedagogical tool we also encountered in Plato. If the mind suffers under the passions of the lower soul, it benefits from temporal punishment, in order to subdue the swelling that burdens the mind. Augustine's recording of the dialogues can be seen as such a restraining measure against the lower passions of his pupils.

Augustine also proves to have learned from classical pedagogical insights with regard to his understanding of the function of God's law and his punishment in the history of salvation. The *dispensatio temporalis* is understood as *medicina animi*, medicine of the mind. In treating his patients, the doctor adapts his remedies to the severity of their illness. The religion of the Old Testament and the coming of Christ in the New Testament are understood as two distinct but related phases of the condescension of divine authority to heal the human mind from its entanglement in the sensible world, and to lead it upwards to the vision of truth through a life of virtue. Augustine compares this pedagogical project to the education of a human

being from childhood to adult maturity. In the period of childhood, in which the mind is not yet able to use reason, God coerces his people to outward obedience to temporal laws through the fear of temporal punishment. These temporal laws were shadows of eternal laws which Christ would reveal through his ministry, and which he would teach to those who believe in him. The people of the New Testament would be set free from the dominion of the passions over reason so that they could be taught freely, without the need of coercion through fear. Augustine does not see this transition from the Old to the New Testament as absolute, however. The New Testament Church threatens with eternal punishment, of which the temporal punishments of the Old Testament were only signs. She still administers to her children the medicines that suit the illness of their souls.

Augustine's use of the pedagogical framework to understand the relationship between the Old and the New Testament has particular consequences for his understanding of Paul. He understands Paul's characterization of the Old Testament law as a pedagogue to Christ in Galatians 3 from the classical context in which the pedagogue had the task to restrain the child's irrational inclinations, until he became rational and could be taught freely. This is the purpose for which Christ came into the world. He is the teacher who illuminates our mind so that we can be taught by words, rather than being coerced through temporal threats. Although Augustine never explicitly abandons this pedagogical hermeneutic when relating the Old Testament law to Christ, he will enrich it with a forensic hermeneutic. The law as pedagogue does not merely bring us to Christ the teacher, but also to Christ the mediator of righteousness, who died for our sins on the cross. The problem that Christ solves is not merely the problem of irrationality, but of humanity's irreversible guilt before God.

In his reflections on church discipline, Augustine continued to apply philosophical ideas of pedagogy. The medical imagery remains present, for example in the context of fraternal correction and monastic discipline. Just as in Cassiciacum, Augustine remains aware of how the illness of the mind influences the moral purity of mutual correction and therefore emphasizes that all rebuke should be preceded by careful self-scrutiny. Augustine uses Stoic insights on the troubling effect of anger on the human mind. Before we inflict rebuke, we should ask ourselves if we are motivated by the love of justice and the desire to correct the sinner, rather than by the desire to avenge ourselves. Augustine not only applies this idea to the members of his own congregation and religious community, but also to the Donatists (in his *Psalmus contra Partem Donati*), whom he sees as caught in the chains of inveterate anger against the Catholics. Simultaneously, his use of Stoic ideas on rebuke are 'coloured' by his reading of Paul, who emphasizes the need of love and humility in the exercise of judgement. The knowledge of one's own sinfulness and limited ability to know the heart of the brother should make one hesitant to chastise too easily.

Augustine also Christianizes his use of medical imagery in his reflections on Christian discipline. This has to do with his understanding of grace. In the Platonic tradition, correction and punishment are understood in medical terms, because sin is only something one suffers under, not something one is guilty of. Sin namely arises from ignorance, and must therefore be seen as not culpable. Punishment is therefore never retributive, but rather meant as shock therapy of the mind. Augustine sees sin an offence against God, and its effects as the penal consequences of this offence. The effects of sin on the mind and the will cannot be cured if its root, namely guilt, is not forgiven by God. Man has brought himself, by his own culpable choice, in a position of condemnation, and can only be released from this forensic position through faith in Christ.

At this point, Augustine's theological motivation to apply brotherly correction has become radically Christian. The motivation with which we apply correction is not the fact that the brother has a rational mind (which has the power to release itself from the dominion of the passions), but the fact that Christ had died for him. One should regard the brother as being in Christ. For this reason, one may expect that the brother is susceptible to the fear of God, will listen to the correction, and take refuge in his mediator, as Christ himself has purchased the conversion of his elect, and the forgiveness of their sins on the cross.

JUDGEMENT AND MERCY IN AUGUSTINE'S ANTI-MANICHAEAN POLEMIC

Augustine uses his pedagogical understanding of punishment in the service of his anti-Manichaean polemics. Man's involuntary suffering should not be understood as the assault of a contrary nature, but rather as God's penalty for human sin. God uses this punishment of sin within his pedagogy of salvation, in order to lead fallen souls back to himself. In his Cassiciacum Dialogues, Augustine already makes this point when he says that the human soul suffers under the effects of its own folly. Divine providence takes care that the soul that attaches itself to changeable reality suffers the effects of its own sins through ontological degradation. In this way it experiences God as its enemy. This same God expresses his goodness, however, when he makes the soul aware of its disease through suffering and instruction.

In the writings that Augustine composes after his baptism, he situates human suffering in the context of creation and fall. We currently suffer under the consequences of the fall of Adam and of our subsequent sins. Augustine understands this fall as a passing from a state of inward contemplation towards a situation in which the soul seeks truth and beatitude

through action in the body, in the external world. As a consequence of this disobedience to God, the lower soul and the body have become disobedient to man, so that he continuously suffers from lack and want, and has difficulty discerning the truth. I argued against Sage and others that the early Augustine sees man as deeply fallen, not only because he suffers under the mortality of the body, but also because of the carnal nature of his soul, which inevitably entangles itself in carnal habit.

However, we also observed that Augustine combines the idea of divine punishment with the idea of God's mercy and free will. By condemning man to live in a mortal body and suffer the pains of bodily existence, God has allowed man to lay down the pride through which he fell away from God and regain his original state of contemplation. Augustine even says that the punishment of the first sin expresses God's clemency more than his severity, as he allows man to be educated by it. Augustine compares the resistance of the bodily creation to the accusation of the law. In the body's resistance to human sin, one should hear God's law, which commands man to love God above anything else. The rebellion of creation against man reminds him of his own rebellion against God, encouraging him once again to rule over the things of which he has become a slave. It is this interpretation of human suffering that Augustine uses against the Manichees, who, in his view, exculpate themselves by attributing their suffering in the body to the assault of a contrary nature.

Although the early Augustine does say that man needs interior illumination and love in order to be able to respond to the divine law that addresses him in his suffering, he nonetheless reserves room for independent human effort. He understands man's return to God as a gradual process, in which divine grace, the human will, and God's purifying judgement work together. This idea comes to the fore in his description of ascent in *De quantitate animae* and later in *De diuersis quaestionibus* 36. At the same time, Augustine has a deep awareness of the remaining stains of habit upon the human soul. This already comes to the fore in the *Soliloquia*, where the assault of habit compels him to lay down his pretended purity. This awareness is also present in his understanding of ascent in *De quantitate animae*: the soul, which easily deceives itself about its own purity, must always be receptive to God's purifying and humbling judgement, if it wants to advance in virtue. Notwithstanding these insights, Augustine continues to think within a pedagogical framework in which man's salvation is conceived in terms of a continual progress towards perfection. As becomes clear from *De libero arbitrio* and his commentaries on Romans, Augustine is motivated by the desire to combine the idea of divine justice and the help of grace by basing the reception of grace on the merit of man's will. Carol Harrison has rightly argued that Augustine from the very beginning regards man as deeply dependent upon God's grace. However, Augustine sees this grace as operating within an ascensional model, in

which the human will has a role of its own to play in the work of purification. God's law and punishment function as corrective means in this process of inner purgation.

In the 390s, however, Augustine gradually shifts his understanding of the relationship between God's justice and his grace. He further develops the forensic framework, according to which man at present suffers under the penal consequences of the first sin, in the light of his appropriation of Paul. In conversation with the Manichees, he attempts to reclaim Paul's discourse on the battle between the flesh and spirit; and he comes to conclude in *Ad Simplicianum* that man's *liberum arbitrium*, sold as it is under the sin, has lost all power to turn toward God. In *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine still maintained that our experience of ignorance and difficulty can effect in us the *desire* to know the good and to want it, and thus provokes us to ask for help. God does not blame us for the penal state in which we were born, but for how we relate to this state. Augustine abandons this idea, however, in *Ad Simplicianum*. Because of the original sin in the garden, humanity is condemned to death row, and it awaits final damnation.

His battle with the Manichees over the correct interpretation of Paul effects a change in Augstine's use of the anti-dualist tradition that he inherited. No longer does he reconcile God's goodness and his severity in a pedagogical model, but he arrives at a radical separation between God's mercy and his punishment over sin. Against the Manichees, Augustine upholds humanity's responsibility before God. Ignorance, concupiscence, and mortality are the penal effects of the first sin for which we are all responsible. We are condemned perpetrators rather than victims. But Augustine abandons the anti-Gnostic tradition in that he argues there is no free will remaining that enables man to respond positively to the penal consequences of his sin. The punishment under which he at present suffers is solely understood as God's retributive response to sin. Man has arrived in a forensic position from which he cannot escape: helpless, but responsible. This shift in Augustine's reception of the anti-Gnostic theology of his predecessors explains why Julian of Aeclanum would later contend against Augustine that the latter had not yet fully freed himself from his Manichaean past.[1]

Along with this development goes a change in Augustine's Christology. Before the 390s he had understood Christ as the Word who had come in the flesh to teach us through his words and example to live a life of virtue and thus enable humanity to be released from its captivity to the senses. In this framework, Christ's death on the cross has an exemplary function. Through his death he condemned our sinful way of relating to this temporal life. However, in his reappropriation of Paul, Augustine comes to see that Christ

[1] *c. Iul. imp.* 4,42.

established salvation through his death itself. In his death on the cross he represented humanity *sub lege*. The law exposed humanity as irreversibly bound to condemnation. Christ the righteous one, however, identified with humanity under the law. In him the life of the old Adam was hung on the cross and was condemned to death. Through Christ's death, God triumphed over sin, death, and the devil, because the righteous one took upon himself the punishment of sinners. Therefore, these sinners, if they believe, receive the right to be released from condemnation. In Christ their forensic position has changed. They have died to the law and live for God through the Spirit of Christ who enables them to fulfil the law. I also argued that this theology of penal atonement should not be confused with the later development of this doctrine that teaches that Christ suffered the final punishment in our stead. He rather identified with humanity's present penal situation and deprived it of its binding claim. This does not exclude, but rather includes the idea of post-mortem purification, an idea to which Augustine alludes in some early texts.

In this new forensic framework, Augustine comes to understand the pedagogical function of law and punishment as *disciplina iustitiae*. Sins have been forgiven. In principle man is released from final condemnation, because the claim of sin over him has been broken. However, God's justice does not compromise with his grace. Therefore, the penal consequences of the first sin and of subsequent sins remain present in the life of a Christian. But now they are put in the service of the Spirit's work in the believer. God still allows the believer to fall back into sin, but does so in order to deepen the awareness of his need for the grace of Christ. Augustine even interprets Paul's sufferings as retribution for his persecution of the Christian Church, but this retribution ultimately serves to purge his soul from the desires for temporal glory that motivated him before his conversion. As observed, the *Christus medicus* motif also changes in this context. The healing of Christ received a new meaning in the forensic framework. It is not just a gradual process of moral purgation (as it was still understood in, for example, the *Soliloquia*), but it is executed on two levels: Christ takes away the root of humanity's disease, namely sin, and then cures its effects by the Spirit.

In my interpretation of the *Confessions*, I have attempted to show that this new model of Augustine's interpretation of the function of judgement in the context of salvation recurs in his theological narration of his conversion and post-conversion life. Augustine presents himself as a slave of sin, unreceptive to God's accusations sounding to him through his sufferings. When the law of the mind was awakened in him through his reading of Cicero, the flesh immediately reasserted its right over him and drew him into Manichaeism. God had to open his eyes to the accusation of the law through his readings of the books of the Platonists. This led Augustine into a crisis of internal division: sin did not let him go. However, grace opened the way to confession and to the victory of the law of the mind over the flesh, but Augustine still had to learn

that it is incorporation into Christ that removes the claim of sin over him. Because Christ gives believers a new forensic position before God, they are allowed to ask: 'Give what you command, and command what you will.' In this context, Augustine's ongoing experiences of failure helped him to grow in his dependence upon the grace of Christ. Augustine has relinquished his focus on ascent as a gradual process of growth in virtue. Rather, the Christian life is an ongoing exercise of *confession*: the momentary enjoyment of the first fruits of the Spirit (*confessio laudis*), the continual remorse over sin, and the necessary pleading for the mediation of Christ, 'who intercedes for us'.

THE DEBATES ABOUT GRACE AND AUGUSTINE'S JUSTIFICATION OF COERCION

A third context for our research question was offered by a debate within Augustinian scholarship on Augustine's views on the function of punishment and coercion in the process of salvation. We touched upon two discussions, the grace-debate and the debate on the prehistory of Augustine's justification of state-sponsored coercion.

Grace and Punishment

With regard to the first debate, my contention is that Augustine, before his rereading of Paul, although espousing a quite radical doctrine of sin, and teaching that grace is a matter of re-creation of the entire person, still largely thinks within a pedagogical framework, in which grace is primarily understood in terms of corrective punishment and the teaching of Christ; it presupposes the cooperation of free will.

Augustine's rereading of Paul, in conversation with the Manichees in the 390s, enriches the framework in which he conceptualizes sin and grace. His doctrine of sin reaches its climax in *Ad Simplicianum*. He comes to deny that the punishment of the first sin has left any freedom to the human will to respond positively to God's call. Original sin inextricably binds man to his penal condition. Along with this development in his doctrine of sin, Augustine comes to emphasize the salvific nature of Christ's death. In Christ the old man has been condemned, so that those who are in Christ are set free from the juridical claim of sin over them. Through faith the believer is granted a new forensic position before God, which assures him that his penal condition will not last forever; rather, it is put in the service of his renewal. This discovery affirms the interests of the proponents of the continuity-thesis, but also

concedes to the proponents of the discontinuity-thesis that Augustine's rereading of Paul in conversation with the Manichees effected a decisive change in his conceptualization of the operation of grace, and his expectations of moral progress.

Augustine's Justification of Coercion

In discussions on the background of Augustine's justification of coercion against the Donatists, Brown, Flasch, and Lee-Dixon argued that the early Augustine was opposed to the use of the threat of (temporal) punishment for conversion. They contended that, as he gradually adopted a negative view of human moral capabilities, he came to acknowledge the usefulness of fear in order to curb or break the bond of habit, and to foster a process of reflection. It could bring a person '*sub lege*', as Lee-Dixon puts it. The relationship between Augustine's doctrine of predestination and the issue of coercion has been evaluated in different ways. Whereas Brown argued that a doctrine of predestination relieved Augustine of concern over those who only converted out of fear, Flasch argued that the authoritarian image of God inherent to this doctrine justified the use of violence to 'bring the predestined in'. We further reviewed the scholarly opinion that the change in Augustine's attitude towards coercion would have been caused by an evolution in his understanding of the relationship between the Old and the New Testament. He first saw the Old Testament as a stage that was surpassed by the New Testament, but he increasingly came to equate the two.

The conclusion of our research is that Augustine's belief in the need for coercive measures for conversion is already discernible in the Cassiciacum Dialogues. It is rooted in classical pedagogical thought on the usefulness of punishment in order to liberate the mind from its suffering under irrational impulses. In the Cassiciacum Dialogues, Augustine acknowledges the usefulness of fortune's assaults to awaken the soul to its poverty. Augustine himself also uses restraint as part of the dialogical exercises of his students. As their soul still suffers under the habit of seeking praise, they need to be restrained by a punishment that fits their desire, namely the fear of losing face.

We further concluded against Brown and Cranz that the early Augustine does not see a radical difference between the Old and the New Testament with regard to God's methods of teaching. It is indeed true that coercion by fear prevailed in the Old Testament, and instruction by love in the New, but this is not an absolute opposition. At the beginning of God's educational programme, he used earthly threats and promises to bind a carnal people to himself. In the New Testament, Christ sets his people free from fear of temporal punishment, leading them to the eternal inheritance of the heavenly kingdom through the rational instruction of the mind. However, as the

converted person and the Church at large remain mixed bodies, the threat of punishment remains useful for Christians. In the New Testament this threat is primarily the threat of eternal punishment (due to its situation in salvation history 'between the kingdoms'), but Augustine's theological model does not exclude the use of temporal punishment when the illness of the patient requires it, and the one who administers the punishment has received authority to do so.

Augustine develops his thoughts on the relationship between Old and New Testament with regard to God's method of teaching in the 390s. Against the Manichees, he argues that Christ's command to turn the other cheek is not in contradiction to the divine command to Moses and Elijah to exercise judgement over the inhabitants of Canaan or the priests of Baal. The love of justice, the love of the sinner, and the possession of authority are what justify such an act. The example of the apostles illustrates this. Augustine concedes, however, that capital punishment was abolished in the time of the New Testament (at least as executed by the Church). Augustine's general reflections on the authority of temporal rulers, and his defence of Constans's intervention in Africa in order to establish church unity, further suggest that all theological arguments are there to justify the support of the state to the discipline of the Church. In *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* (400) he elaborates this understanding of the task of Christian rulers as supporting the Church's battle against the works of the flesh. During the first half of the 390s, however, the justification of state-sponsored legal action in favour of the Church does not yet play a role in his polemic. He uses it neither against the Manichees, against whom he could have invoked the anti-heretic law of Theodosius (372), nor against the Donatists. He always prefers dialogue on the basis of reason or Scripture to any use of restraint that does not lead to a true fear of the Lord.

The latter approach is also visible in his own practice of church discipline. Augustine first approaches his people with teaching. As believers of the New Testament they may be expected to possess the Spirit and be receptive to teaching. When they do not listen, he reminds them of their responsibility before God as New Testament believers. If the people of Israel were already so severely punished for a sin which was not even done in the name of true religion, what will happen to God's people in the time of the New Testament, if they continue to organize licentious banquets in the very name of true religion? Augustine takes recourse to a new 'mode of coercion' (Frederick Russell) by threatening his congregation with God's judgement. He moreover admonishes his flock to use the Pauline means of social isolation: true believers should not eat with those who organize *laetitiae* in their homes. Furthermore, he uses the coercive authority of a council to restrain the organization of these feasts. When many of his congregants turn out to be intractable to words and threats, Augustine announces that God himself will come to visit his people with the rod of correction. Just like Paul in 2 Corinthians 2, he sees the Church

as possessed with the authority to invoke God's intervention in order to correct his people, so that his elect might be saved.

My suggestion is that Augustine's justification of state-sponsored coercion of the Donatists was most likely based upon this notion of redemptive correction. He was one of the few bishops of his time who did not actively promote the intervention of the state in the Donatist conflict for reasons other than the preservation of civil order. He only began to justify the state laws as a providential means of discipline after he had witnessed the conversions of Donatists in Hippo. Could it be that he interpreted state intervention as God's response to the Church's prayers for conversion of the Donatists, which had as yet yielded little fruit? Because human persuasion had failed, God himself had intervened to redress the sins of his chosen ones and bring them back to the flock.

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Series

Anastasi	*Psalmus contra Partem Donati*, ed. R. Anastasi (Padua, 1957), reproduced in *Bibliothèque augustinienne* 28.
CCL	*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1865–.
PL	J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus. Series Latina,* Paris, 1844–55.
Verheijen	*Praeceptum*, ed. L. Verheijen, in: L. Verheijen, *La Règle de Saint Augustin*, vol. 1, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1967, 49–66.

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Translations

Abbreviations of series

ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers, edited by Cleveland Cox, A (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1885–96).

BA Bibliothèque Augustinienne (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes).

FC The Fathers of the Church Series (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press).

NPNF Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, edited by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1886–1900).

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